



Universidad de Oviedo
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Gemma
Erasmus Mundus Master's Degree
in Women's and Gender Studies

He who pays the piper calls the tune: masculinity and sex purchase online – a critical discourse analysis

Author: Rosa Marina Senent Julián

Main supervisor: María del Carmen Pérez Riu - Universidad de Oviedo

Support supervisor: Marek Wojtaszek - University of Łódź

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**MÁSTER ERASMUS MUNDUS
EN ESTUDIOS DE LAS MUJERES Y DEL GÉNERO**

**ERASMUS MUNDUS MASTER'S DEGREE IN WOMEN'S AND
GENDER STUDIES**



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UNIVERSIDAD DE OVIEDO, 2017

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Tesis de master//M. A. Thesis

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TÍTULO/TITLE: “He who pays the piper calls the tune: masculinity and sex purchase online – a critical discourse analysis”

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1. RESUMEN EN ESPAÑOL

Este estudio es una contribución a la línea de investigación que aborda la demanda de prostitución. El propósito de este trabajo es analizar críticamente el discurso producido por hombres que buscan servicios sexuales a través de plataformas online tomando en consideración los actuales debates feministas, particularmente la problemática cuestión del estatus legal de la prostitución. Explorar las expectativas de los hombres que pagan por sexo abre una ventana a su sistema de creencias acerca de la sexualidad y sobre las mujeres en general. En términos prácticos, dichas expectativas pueden afectar a la manera en que abordan sus relaciones interpersonales y, por tanto, al logro de la igualdad fáctica entre hombres y mujeres a nivel social.

2. ENGLISH SUMMARY

This study is a contribution to the progressively increasing research trend on the issue of men's demand for prostitution. The purpose of this paper is to critically analyse the discourse produced by men who seek out sexual services through online platforms under the light of current feminist debates regarding prostitution, particularly over the question of its legal status. Sex buyers' expectations in commercial sexual encounters with prostituted women provide valuable insights into their belief system about sexuality and women in general. Such expectations are likely to have practical consequences and implications in the way they behave in their relationships and, therefore, for feminist purposes of equality on a broader scale.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1-3
1 THE PROBLEM OF PROSTITUTION	4-7
1.1 CURRENT FEMINIST DEBATES	7-12
1.2 LEGAL STATUS	12-14
1.3 PROSTITUTION AS A GENDERED PHENOMENON	16-20
2 METHODOLOGY	21
2.1 LANGUAGE AND DISCOURSE	22-23
2.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POWER AND DISCOURSE	23-24
2.3 APPLIED METHODOLOGY	24-26
2.4 FIELD-WORK PROCEDURE	26-28
2.5 A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY	28-31
3 WEBSITE ANALYSIS	32
3.1 DESCRIPTION	33
3.1.1 DIRECTORY	33-37
3.1.2 ANNOUNCEMENTS CALENDAR	37-39
3.1.3 REVIEWS	39-41
3.1.4 MY ACCOUNT	41-42
3.1.5 CONTACT	42-43
3.1.6 ADVERTISING INFO	44-47
3.1.7 LINKS	47-48
3.1.8 A NOTE ON LEGISLATION	48-49
3.2 ANALYSIS OF THE REVIEWS	49-50
3.2.1 INFORMATION GIVEN ABOUT THE WOMEN	50-60
3.2.2 INFORMATION GIVEN ABOUT THEMSELVES	60-63
3.2.3 THE POSITIVE REVIEWS	63
3.2.3.1 DEFINING A “GOOD SERVICE”, OR PUSHING HER LIMITS	63-65
3.2.3.2 BEING PROFESSIONAL AS BEING SERVICEABLE	65-69
3.2.3.3 THE “TRUE WHORE”: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE IDEAL PROSTITUTE	69-73
3.2.3.4 FEMALE (LACK OF) PLEASURE WITHIN THE PROSTITUTION CONTRACT	73-78
3.2.4 THE NEGATIVE REVIEWS	78
3.2.4.1 DEFINING A “BAD SERVICE”: THE MONEY FACTOR	78-80
3.2.4.2 BOUNDARIES AND DISSOCIATION	81-87
3.2.4.3 “BASIC SERVICES” AS A FORM OF VIOLENCE AND A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE	87-91
3.2.4.4 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND SUSPICION OF EXPLOITATION	91-95
4 CONCLUSIONS	95-104
BIBLIOGRAPHY	105-115
APPENDIX A	116-128
APPENDIX B	129

Introduction

The prostitute has always been under society's surveillance. Treated as a social outcast or a moral perverse, she has walked alone through centuries of human knowledge. Who are those women? Why are they prostitutes? These and similar questions have inspired innumerable answers that have fed the idea that prostitutes compound a separate class of women. They have been studied as voiceless figures who can be rightly attacked or marginalised by the “respectable” members of society. As all women, prostitutes have been relentlessly subject to patriarchal definitions of acceptability. However, the dynamics of prostitution cannot be understood without the demand side of the equation. Who are the men that pay for prostitution to exist? Why do they pay?

The picture indeed would be incomplete without a focus on men as consumers. In the last decades, an increasing number of studies, some with an explicit feminist standpoint, have addressed the issue by analysing men's demand for prostitution, and delved on how they experience buying sex. One of the reasons for the previous unbalance is surely the methodological difficulty of obtaining first-hand unmediated evidence. Nowadays, modern technologies offer a new way of accessing the participants, as the Internet allows the formation of online communities for men who are willing to pay for sex. Virtual communities of sex buyers provide academics with the opportunity of carrying out field research into prostitution-related practices from a distance. Such is the case of this project, whose purpose is to critically analyse the discourse produced by men who seek out prostitution services online. The aim is to explore how these men see the act of paying for sex, particularly their opinions about prostituted women and to what extent the creation of online communities helps them to legitimise the purchase of sex.

Currently, there are many virtual communities of sex buyers on the Internet. After a general screening of a number of Ireland-and-UK-based sites, the one selected for analysis in this project was www.PunterNet.com.¹ The site offers two different sections where the users write openly and unmediatedly about their experiences in the sex market: the community Forum, and the “service provider” reviews. Despite the interest of the forum, this research work has focussed on the reviews because of the specific type of discourse produced in them *by* the men and *about* the women. In the

¹ Please refer to the methodology service for further information concerning the web-site selection process.

Community Forum, sex buyers and other participants interact with each other and discuss different aspects of buying sex. This makes the forum quite miscellaneous and unstructured. Besides, since the posts are written under nicknames or avatars, it is not always easy to identify who is speaking (sex buyer, pimp or service provider). As for the use of only one website, the amount of reviews available in PunterNet alone was large enough to provide an overwhelmingly wide sample (26509 “Positive”, 2966 “Negative” and 292 “Neutral”), and data collected from it seemed to suffice for the kind of analysis I wanted to carry out. The reviewing system is central to this site, and the reviews are structured in a way that allows sex buyers to give information in a systematic way. After considering an approximate number of 200 reviews, 60 reviews were selected, as a manageable sample, and analysed. Thirty were labelled by sex buyers as “positive” and the other thirty as “negative” (“Recommended”, “Not recommended”, respectively). The selection criteria were based on the amount of information provided, looking for representative samples that would help to find the patterns and characteristics of the positive/negative dichotomous way of reviewing women.

Thus, this project concentrates on buyer-authored reviews studied by means of Critical Discourse Analysis. The main objective is to scrutinise the discourse of sex buyers under the light of current feminist debates on prostitution, which disagree on the question of its legal status. Abolitionist feminists defend that prostitution is a form of violence against women and aspire to its eventual extinction by taking legal measures that shall reduce the demand. Pro-sex work feminists aim at making prostitution a legal practice. They maintain that it is a job like any other and claim that reducing the violence suffered by prostituted women and the illegal practices associated with prostitution, such as human trafficking for sexual exploitation, are dependent on eliminating the social stigma attached to it. Sex buyers' attitudes toward prostituted women are relevant for the potential success of the pro-legalisation project. The analysis of male discourse provides the opportunity to verify whether the relationship they establish with the women they purchase sex from is based on a form of democratic mutual equality (similar to the one a customer can establish with a taxi driver, a hairdresser or other kinds of “service providers”) or if such relationship is addressed in terms of dichotomic, gendered, power relations based on domination and subordination, as abolitionist feminists contend.

This essay is divided into four sections: Contextualisation, Methodology, Analysis, and Conclusions. In the first chapter, current feminist debates on prostitution will be discussed, and we will take notice of its actual legal status in countries of European territory such as Germany and Sweden. In prostitution, the “customers” are predominantly male and the “service providers” are women and discourse is constructed by the men, who “pay the piper,” about the women performing the “tune.” The second chapter contains an exposition of some basic principles of Critical Discourse Analysis, with a focus on the relationship between discourse and power relations, and the political commitment inherent to CDA. Its basic concepts will be applied to the analysis of the reviews to try to identify the main tenets of the power-structures implied in discourse. In the third chapter, the PunterNet site will be described. The different sections will be analysed to give the reader an understanding of the way it works and its organisation. This section will be followed by the analysis of the 30 positive and 30 negative reviews, before moving on to the conclusions.

A critical discourse analysis of the selected samples allowed the finding of the patterns that characterise the positive and the negative reviews, which are inevitably linked to the kind of things sex buyers want, require and expect from prostituted women and, conversely, the kind of things they do not want/require/expect to see in prostituted women. Sex buyers' expectations in commercial sexual encounters with prostituted women are a good insight into their belief system about women in general. As far as sexuality is concerned and within a heterosexual context, such expectations are likely to have practical consequences and implications in the way they behave in their relationships with women (both prostituted and non-prostituted) in terms of sexuality and, therefore, for feminist purposes of equality on a broader scale.

1. The problem of prostitution

Over the centuries, prostitution has been problematised from many sides. Often called “the oldest profession”, its existence has been regarded as inevitable and unquestionable, and the women involved in it treated as loose, sick or fallen women, unworthy of respect. Nowadays, it is still defended as the necessary evil that shall protect the virtue of respectable women from men's ravenous sexual desire. As proof of the double moral characteristic of that old argument, we will quote Bernard Mandeville who, in the 18th century, proclaimed the necessity of sacrificing one part of womankind to preserve the other in *A Modest Defence of Public Stews: Prostitution and its discontents in Early Georgian England*. Mandeville compared women in brothels to the rotten meat a butcher should leave aside if he is to preserve his healthy stock from flies:

Observe the Policy of a Modern Butcher, persecuted with a Swarm of Carnivorous Flies; where all his Engines and Fly-Flaps have prov'd ineffectual to defend his Stall against the Greedy Assiduity of those Carnal Insects, he very Judiciously cuts off a Fragment, already blown, which serves to hang up for a Cure; and thus, by Sacrificing a Small Part, already Tainted, and now worth Keeping, he wisely secures the Safety of the Rest (cited in Grant 2012, 105).

The collective belief summarised in this paragraph is based on two wrong assumptions. First, it is firmly sustained on the Madonna/Whore dichotomy, according to which patriarchal standards of social respectability divide women into two groups: respectable (good women, epitomising purity or motherhood and branded by marriage) and unrespectable (bad women, male “public property” branded by prostitution). The second false assumption is the one endorsed by essentialist accounts, which defend male sexuality is instinctual and men's need for an outlet in order not to go out of control and endanger the safety of all women. This is central to the idea that men should have regular sexual access to women, and it justifies rape and the use of prostituted women by men. As Susan S.M. Edwards puts it, essentialist arguments about the fundamental gender roles in relation to one another and to sexual pleasure sanction the sexual

subordination of women as fixed and immutable (Edwards 1996, 95).

In the 20th century, Freud provided an explanation for sexual relations and power, where the man “always feels his sexual activity hampered by his respect for the woman and only develops full sexual potency when he finds himself in the presence of a lower type of sexual object” (cited in Edwards 1996, 97). Freud's theories reinforced the idea that men's and women's respective sexualities were essential to their nature and concomitant with their social roles. In the same century, Structuralist criticism aimed at identifying the underlying structures behind the organisation of sexual difference and argued that sexuality was not a purely biological fact, but a socially constructed phenomenon. Foucault's work, in particular *The History of Sexuality*, is crucial in this respect for it examines the structures of language and discourse in the articulation of sexuality. The feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s also criticised essentialist accounts of sexuality. Feminist theorists such as Kate Millet were very keen on vindicating that women also have sexual desire and deserve to be free to live their sexuality on their own terms.

However, the ideology behind Mandeville's position can be still found in current defences of prostitution. The idea that the male sex-drive explains its existence is, in fact, a typical resource found in sex buyers' claims of their need of it. For example, Martin A. Monto has pointed out that some of the participants of his study, who were either married or in a relationship, claimed they needed to perform certain sexual acts that are considered morally questionable but were highly gratifying for them, so they must recur to prostitutes to satisfy them because their wives/girlfriends will not consent to their particular sexual needs (sometimes because even the men themselves regard them as “degrading acts” for women) (Monto 2000, 78-79). María José Barahona and José Manuel García quote sex buyers from Madrid who believe that society needs prostitution because it provides a valuable social service, and that rape rates would increase if prostitution was to be banned (Barahona and García 2003, 92). Of course, such belief implies that prostitution not only benefits men by providing them with a sexual outlet to their “biological” urges, but also that it also benefits non-prostituted women in terms of their own safety (that is, of not being systematically raped).

Thus, Mandeville's theory that prostituted women are like the rotten meat that helps to keep the rest of the butcher's stock free from stain is well alive in our days. The

arguments stated by sex buyers that treat prostitution as a “social service” specifically for men, implicitly assert that women ('s bodies) must be at the service of men ('s sexual needs). This idea is inherently misogynistic, incompatible with women and men deserving equal social treatment and, therefore, illegitimate from a feminist point of view. Aware of how dangerous it is for women to accept male sexual urges as an incontestable fact, many feminist authors have put it under question. In the early 1980s, Adrienne Rich stressed the relevance of the scarcely questioned male sexual desire, which turns out to serve to justify (and thus perpetuate) sexual violence against women in its many forms:

In the mystique of the overpowering, all-conquering male sex drive, the penis-with-a-life-of-its-own, is rooted the law of male sex right to women, which justifies prostitution as a universal cultural assumption on the one hand, while defending sexual slavery within the family on the basis of 'family privacy and cultural uniqueness' on the other. The adolescent male sex drive, which, as both young women and men are taught, once triggered cannot take responsibility for itself or take no for an answer, becomes, according to [Kathleen] Barry, the norm and rationale for adult male sexual behavior. [...] Women learn to accept as natural the inevitability of this 'drive' because they receive it as dogma (Rich 2003, 134).

The feminist analysis aimed at questioning the reasons that have been traditionally given to justify men's violence against women are crucial to challenging the patriarchal *status quo*. It is worth noting that the supposedly uncontrollable male sex-drive has become a trait of what some authors have called “hegemonic sexuality”, based on a “penis-centered model of sex” (Plummer 2005, 179). Ken Plummer points out that, in a review of many contemporary studies of young men across class and ethnicity from 1993, James Messerschmidt suggested that “normative heterosexuality is constructed as a practice that helps to reproduce the subordination of young women and to produce age-specific heterosexual styles of masculinity, a masculinity centring on an uncontrollable and unlimited sexual appetite” (2005, 184). This is the “grand story of

male sexuality” based on an essentialising narrative that portrays men “as driven by sex; focused on their penises; in persistent need of orgasm; and often as borderline, if not actual, rapists” (186). This does not mean all men experience sex according to that model, for to assert that would imply to fall into essentialist accounts (180) but, indeed, most men consider that sex is important as a “validation of their masculinity” (184). The study of “sex as sex, of *sex sui generis*,” Plummer asserts, has gone from the agenda, as it conceals the fact that human sexualities are “forms of social actions” and, as such, individuals compose their sexual lives out of the social resources available (187).

1. 1. Current feminist debates²

In the 19th century, British feminists of the abolitionist movement under Josephine Butler's lead were united in holding men accountable for the abuse of women in prostitution (Barry, 1979; Jeffreys, 2008). Over the last few decades, however, the feminist movement has been divided between those who believe prostitution must be regarded as any other job and those who believe prostitution is violence against women. Thus, current debates take place primarily around the question of whether prostitution is “sex work” or “paid rape.” These are roughly the two main positions, which have fair points that can be considered as common to the whole feminist movement. One of the core problems for them both is the issue of violence. Indeed, both pro- and anti-prostitution feminists give a great deal of importance to violence suffered by prostituted women, but they differ on the explanations and solutions offered to such violence. In the light of these radically opposed viewpoints, an effort to subject ourselves to (auto)criticism could lead us to a less bitter debate and the possibility of working together, at least to a certain extent. For example, while the abolitionist movement has had to face the fact that some women may actually want to engage voluntarily in “sex work”, pro-prostitution feminists need to be aware that their analyses of prostitution may be rightly applied only to the experience of a small privileged minority of “First World” women, as survivors (Carter and Giobbe, 2006) and academics (O'Connell Davidson, 2002) have noted.

Julia O'Connell Davidson's large research on prostitution has involved

² Debates on prostitution throughout History have been and continue to be wide and complex. For practical reasons, we will exclude religious, conservative-based discourses against or in favour of prostitution and focus solely on feminist debates.

ethnographic and interview work with prostitutes, third-party organisers of prostitution and sex buyers in both affluent and poor countries. As evidence of the complexity of the debate, she explains that, in all countries where she has conducted research, female prostitutes are legally and socially constructed as a separate class of persons, and subjected to a range of civil and human rights abuse and, because of this, she sympathises with “sex work” feminists who demand specific protection for prostitutes so that they can be offered the same legal and political rights as their fellow citizens. But, at the same time, she notes that data from her research show a very gloomy picture as to what prostituted women must endure. Thus, she finds no reasons to justify the perpetuation of prostitution and, in this sense, she sympathises with the feminist abolitionist case (2002, 84). As she has put it, those who work in prostitution have rights and deserve respect not *because* or *despite* the fact they work as prostitutes, but because they are human beings (2002, 93).

The feminist pro-prostitution side is represented by organisations such as COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics), a San Francisco-based prostitutes’ rights organisation, which was founded by Margo St. James in 1973 and advocates full decriminalisation. They defend prostitution is just like any other job, only highly stigmatised due to sexist and moralist prejudices. They propose to re-signify the meaning of the word *whore* through the legal status of prostitution in order to end the stigma associated with “sex work,” for they believe that eliminating the stigma would reduce violence against women in prostitution. In 1989, Gail Pheterson published the *Vindication of the Rights of Whores*, where she exposed the arguments of the pro-prostitution lobbies in the United States. Nowadays, there are many prostitutes’ rights groups, such as AMMAR (Asociación de Mujeres Meretrices de la Argentina) (www.ammarr.org.ar), the English Collective of Prostitutes in the United Kingdom (www.prostitutescollective.net) and Colectivo Hetaira in Spain (www.colectivohetaira.org).

The anti-prostitution side is well epitomised by organisations such as WHISPER (Women Hurt In Systems of Prostitution Engaged in Revolt), founded in the early 1980s by Evelina Giobbe, an ex-prostituted woman herself, who defines prostitution as commercial sexual violence. They emphasise the importance of targeting sex buyers as the ones who perpetuate prostitution through their demand for it. There are also many

organisations worldwide that present prostitution as sexual violence and offer help and support to prostituted women. Some of them are Pink Cross Foundation Australia (www.pinkcross.org.au), Ruhama in the Republic of Ireland (www.ruhama.ie) and APRAMP (Asociación para la Prevención, Reinserción y Atención a la Mujer Prostituida) in Spain (www.apramp.org). Giobbe is not alone on equating prostitution to sexual abuse. Currently, many formerly prostituted women and feminist authors have made the link between prostitution and rape.

Survivor Christine Stark has also said prostitution must not be analysed as a profession or occupation, but rather as “organized sexual abuse” (Stark 2006, 40). Irish journalist Rachel Moran, who was involved in prostitution in Dublin from 15 to 22 years old, has called prostitution “paid sexual abuse” and “the commercialisation of sexual abuse” (Moran 2013, 112). Geneviève Gilbert, ex-prostituted woman and visual artist who founded the Pink Cross Foundation Australia, has asserted “We need to shift our focus to the buyers and ask: Why do they buy? How can they break free from this entitlement to buy women? Without being paid, a woman would not have sex with them! We need to create support programs to change their attitudes (John's Schools like they exist in the USA³). We have to expose how *men use their financial power over women to get non-consensual sex*” (Gilbert 2016, 179, emphasis added).

The non-feminist notion according to which rape rates would increase if prostitution were to disappear implicitly makes the point that for some women not to be (illegitimately) sexually abused, other women must be (consensually⁴) sexually abused. The demand for money in the transaction is crucial, since it shows “that a woman's sexual compliance in the acts were otherwise unwanted” (Baldwin 1992, 119). Prostitution is unique due to the dynamic between sexuality, the body and the sense of self (Pateman 1988) and it “should not be reframed as employment like any other since it is ontologically damaging to the embodied self” (Coy 2009, 66). Maddy Coy explains how her participants' narratives showed that their entry into prostitution was embedded

³ For example, the Sexual Exploitation Education Project (SEEP) in Portland, Oregon and the First Offender Prostitution Program (FOPP) in San Francisco, California. They both began in 1995 and focused on prevention of prostitution with intervention programs for arrested sex buyers. The SEEP was based on the principles of batterer intervention and it was specifically sought to link prostitution to other forms of violence against women. “For a period of time, it was successful and still stands as a model for educational programs for court-mandated sex buyers” (See Farley 2011a, 57-62 for more details).

⁴ Importantly, it can be said to be “consensual” at the moment of getting the money, but not always about the development of the sexual encounter. Rachel Moran, as we will see, also notes that when a woman accepts the money, she cannot tell if the man will stay within the agreed limits and, if he does not, it may be too late for her to back off (Moran 2013, 112).

in previous experiences of objectification and sexual abuse. She notes that early sexualisation convinced them that male abusers, supported by socio-cultural norms, “have the right to define meanings attached to women’s bodies where women are valued primarily for their sexualized bodies” and, thus, that “sexual abuse signifies to women that bodies can be appropriated by others for their sexual gratification, reinforcing both a sense of personal powerlessness, and (dis)embodiment, and wider male entitlement of sexual access to women” (66).

It is understood that a dangerous job must be regulated to protect the workers. But there are intrinsic difficulties in regarding prostitution as a “job” and regulating the risky practices found in it to protect “sex workers.” This is not only because of the intimate connection between the bodily experience, identity, and the self (and the negative psychological consequences found in many prostituted women due to that link) of which Maddy Coy speaks about, but also because, as we will see, many of the things that put them at actual risk are inherent to the idea of “giving a good service to customers.” Our evidence shows that the sexual preferences of sex buyers often include practices that may lead to venereal diseases (oral, anal, vaginal sex without condom) or pregnancy (intercourse without condom, for which they are often willing to pay more), and porn-like “hardcore sex” that may cause bleeding, bruises, cervical injuries, etc.

Sheila Jeffreys has pointed out that the position of a small number of prostitutes' rights activists has gained great publicity because it is popular with the media and with all the powerful economic and political forces that represent the interests of sex buyers, whereas the work of organisations such as WHISPER, which represent prostituted and ex-prostituted women who find prostitution dangerous and damaging, are not so well known. Thus, the problem is not about listening to prostitutes, but about deciding which prostituted and ex-prostituted women to listen to (Jeffreys 1997, 77). In 1981, COYOTE claimed to have up to 30,000 members, of which only 3% were prostituted women. This leaves 97% syndicated activists advocating for decriminalisation in spite of not been involved in prostitution themselves.⁵ However, the myth was fed that it was an

⁵ Currently, there are some prostitutes' rights organisations that have been denounced for having second interests behind their claims about decriminalising prostitution for the sake of “sex workers' rights.” For example, in 2012 journalist Kajsa Skarsgård revealed that Rose Alliance Sweden (an organisation that claims to fight for the rights of sex workers) was financially supported by the Dutch organisation Mama Cash (which advocated for the decriminalisation of prostitution). The leader of Rose Alliance, Pye Jakobsson, has been pointed as selling the “happy hooker” myth while, at the same time, acting as a madam herself and helping to recruit new girls to the strip club “Flirt Fashion” in Stockholm. Accessed on May 5, 2017. <http://kvinnofronten.nu/eng/Newsletter/debate-rose-alliance.htm>. In the same line, International Amnesty’s draft policy cited support from “human rights organisations” and “most significantly, a large number of sex worker

organisation mostly formed by women with personal experience in prostitution. Such myth gave legitimacy to its claims. Margo St. James herself has been quoted saying: “That has always been the myth, the media's terminology for their idea of COYOTE. I'm not a working prostitute. I haven't worked for many, many years. Besides, a union of prostitutes is not possible now” (cited in Jeffreys 2008, 72).

Survivors Vednita Carter and Evelina Giobbe (2006, 31) have noted as the “most disturbing aspect of the international prostitutes' rights movement” the fact that a hierarchy has been built on race and class privilege to inform its ideology. They note how the overwhelmingly white leadership of COYOTE is formed of academics (such as Pricilla Alexander and Gail Pheterson), attorneys (American Civil Liberties Union advocating for decriminalisation), who do not have to do “sex work”, and former sex workers who no longer have to do it, such as Margo St. James, Norma Jean Almodovar and Carol Leigh (2006, 31). Carter and Giobbe have rightly accused sex-work feminists, who defend the “free choice” to get involved in prostitution, of ignoring the social context in which prostitution occurs, especially the race/class power differential existing between prostituted women and sex buyers (32). These authors argue that leading marginalised women to believe decriminalisation would change anything in their lives within prostitution is “dangerous and irresponsible” (35).

Indeed, there is large evidence and research done into the numerous harms of prostitution and the lasting psychological damage it causes to those who do it in spite of the country (O'Connell Davidson 2002; Farley 2006), and Carter and Giobbe highlight that women of colour and poor women are the most affected by prostitution. Melissa Farley has also spoken about its harms⁶ as well as about the class and race factor that affect women in prostitution. Farley and Barkan (2008a) reported prostitution to be so stressful that it resulted in high levels of posttraumatic stress disorder similar to that

organisations and networks, including the Global Network of Sex Work Projects [NSWP]”, which “support the decriminalisation of sex work.” Yet, in 2015, the NSWP's former vice-president, Alejandra Gil, was jailed for 15 years accused of sex trafficking. *The Guardian*. “Why is a pimp helping to shape Amnesty's sex trade policy?” Accessed on May 10th. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/oct/22/pimp-amnesty-prostitution-policy-sex-trade-decriminalise-brothel-keepers>.

⁶ Farley has said that “in order to keep the business of sexual exploitation running smoothly, we can not know that prostitution, pornography and trafficking meet or exceed legal definitions of torture” (2006, 122). Peter de Marneffe points out that proofs of its harms by anti-prostitution activists are consistent also with what prostitutes say about their work, even what those who advocate decriminalisation have to say, as shows the position on forced prostitution in the Statement on Prostitution and Human Rights, issued in 1986 at the Second World Whores' Congress by the International Committee for Prostitutes' Rights. Although this committee was formed partly by working and former prostitutes who wanted decriminalisation, it declared that forced prostitution should be recognised in international law as 'a case of torture.' But “why should this kind of forced labor be treated as torture if forced labor in general is not? The only plausible answer is that prostitution is traumatic in a way that other kinds of work are not and that those who have done this work know this” (De Marneffe 2010, 24).

found in war veterans. She points out that Ine Vanwesenbeeck noted comparable symptoms among women in legal Dutch prostitution (2006, 117), and asserts it is extremely dangerous for women regardless of its legal status (legal, illegal, zoned, or decriminalised) or its physical location (strip club, massage parlour, street, escort/home/hotel) (2006, 111). Thus, she maintains that it is a “cruel lie” to suggest decriminalisation or legalisation will protect anyone in prostitution (2004a, 1094). Within the gendered⁷ institution of prostitution, Farley states, race and class create a familiar hierarchy with indigenous women at its lowest point. These women, who are one of the most vulnerable groups at times of wars or economic devastation, are brutally exploited in prostitution (i.e. Mayan women in Mexico City, Hmong women in Minneapolis, Atayal girls in Taipei, Karen or Shan women in Bangkok, First Nations women in Vancouver) (2006, 72).

1. 2. Legal status

As previously mentioned, the defence of decriminalisation is based on the assumption that by changing the legal status of prostitution, the stigma attached to “sex work” would be removed and prostitutes would be treated differently by society (hence suffering less violence). It is worth noting that the pro-prostitution lobby is formed and/or backed not only by feminists endorsing “sex work”, but also by sex traffickers, pimps, brothel owners and sex buyers, who are to have the best position under a decriminalisation policy. Survivors have noted legalisation and decriminalisation to be “social experiments that have repeatedly failed.”⁸ In Europe, the regulatory model is well represented by the Netherlands and Germany. The Netherlands legalised it in 2000. It was expected that this would reduce stigma, violence and sex trafficking, but the country has become a well-known destination for sex tourism (Amsterdam's Red District is indeed a famous tourist attraction) and human trafficking for sexual

⁷ See pages 16-20 for more on this concept.

⁸ Vednita Carter and Evelina Giobbe (2006, 37) emphasise how Gail Petherson herself gives proof of it in *Vindication of the Rights of Whores* (by criticising statutes and ordinances governing prostitution in countries where it is legal or decriminalised; speaking about Philippina women forced into prostitution in Holland; in the interview with “Martha” describing forced prostitution in the Netherlands; denouncing the lack of police response to sexual assaults against prostitutes in England; victim blaming by Australian police responding to serial rapes of prostitutes; court refuses to prosecute sex buyers for theft of service; criticising compulsory medical exams of prostitutes as an invasion of privacy; criticising registration of prostitutes as stigmatising, etc). Melissa Farley noted that 59% of respondents in Germany told them that they did not think that legal prostitution made them any safer from rape and physical assault (Farley 2004, 49).

exploitation.⁹ In the Netherlands, women in prostitution have pointed out that legalisation or decriminalisation does not erase the stigma of prostitution. “Because they must register and lose their anonymity, women are more vulnerable to being stigmatized as “whores,” and this identity follows them everywhere. Thus, the majority of women in prostitution still operate illegally and underground” (Raymond 2003, 4).

In Germany, the Prostitution Act (*Prostitutionsgesetz*) was passed in 2001. Although it was presented as aimed at making prostituted women “regular employees” subject to taxation and access to social benefits, hardly any women have officially registered as prostitutes.¹⁰ Prostituted women are compelled to carry a special “prostitute ID” to prove their legal status, and “Christian Democrats such as Erika Steinbach have called for fines of up to €1000” to punish the women who fail to register.¹¹ As a consequence of the prostitution law, pimps are now “entrepreneurs.” Sex trafficking, especially of women from Romania and Hungary, has increased dramatically, a process “euphemistically described as facilitated migration” (Raymond 2003, 6). Macro-brothels such as the “Pussy Club” offering the “flat rate deal” have become common. When that club opened in 2009, the management charged €70 during the day and €100 in the evening and it was advertised in the following way: “Sex with all women as long as you want, as often as you want and the way you want. Sex. Anal sex. Oral sex without a condom. Three-ways. Group sex. Gang bangs.” The popular German weekly news magazine *Der Spiegel* explained in its online version that according to the police about 1700 sex buyers “took advantage of the offer on the opening weekend. Buses arrived from far away and local newspapers reported that up to 700 men stood in line outside the brothel.” Afterwards, sex buyers “wrote in Internet chat rooms about the supposedly unsatisfactory service, complaining that the women were no longer as fit for use after a few hours.”¹² By allowing prostituted women to be advertised as fast-food, the German State unwittingly acted as the biggest pimp, further

⁹ Standpoint. 2012. “Window Brothels Get the Red Light.” Accessed on May 17, 2017.

<http://standpointmag.co.uk/dispatches-october-12-window-brothels-get-the-red-light-julie-bindel-amsterdam-prostitution>.

¹⁰ Feminist Current. 2016. “Legalization has turned Germany into the ‘Bordello of Europe’ and we should be ashamed.” Accessed May, 17, 2017. <http://www.feministcurrent.com/2016/05/09/legalization-has-turned-germany-into-the-bordello-of-europe-we-should-be-ashamed>.

¹¹ The Open Democracy. “Sex workers fight against compulsory registration and identification.” Accessed on May 20, 2017. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/beyondslavery/sonja-dolinsk/sew-workers-fight-against-compulsory-registration-and-identification-in>.

¹² Der Spiegel online. 2013. “How Legalizing Prostitution Has Failed.” Accessed May 8, 2017. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/human-trafficking-persists-despite-legality-of-prostitution-in-germany-a-902533-2.html>.

normalising and legitimating violence against women. In 2010, the “Pussy Club” was shut down when “six people involved in running the clubs were arrested and charged with human trafficking.” The women “had been fraudulently registered as self-employed” and the owners “admitted to fraud concerning €2.7 million social security payments that had not been made.”¹³

The total prostitution revenue worldwide is estimated to be \$186 billion; estimates for the US alone, where the industry is predominantly illegal, exceeds \$14 billion annually.¹⁴ The “failure” of the legalisation experiment is not so much a failure if we take into account that any government benefits directly from the revenues that come from the sex industry.¹⁵ Huge economic interests are behind the business-like terminology of most of those who defend prostitution is a job like any other, such as ANELA (Asociación Nacional de Empresarios de Locales de Alterne) in Spain (Cantarero 2007). Economic growth is likely to follow legalisation, as the example of Australia has shown.¹⁶ Trafficking and sex tourism are highly lucrative businesses. They both increase in countries where prostitution is legalised or decriminalised. The empirical analysis of a cross-section of up to 150 countries of a study carried out by three economists, who wanted to investigate the impact of legalising prostitution on human trafficking, showed that, on average, sex trafficking increases in countries where prostitution has been legalised (Cho, Dreher and Neumayer, 2013).

The legal option that opposes that of legalisation and decriminalisation is advocated by abolitionist feminists, which is based on the criminalisation of the demand. In Europe, this model has come to be represented by the so-called Nordic Model. In Sweden, prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes are understood to be demand-driven. It has been considered that the very existence of prostitution shapes men's attitudes toward women, and therefore it has been regarded as an *obstacle* to gender equality. In this country, buying sex is a criminal offence since 1999, on penalty of a fine or up to six months' imprisonment. Selling sex has not been

¹³ TheLocal. 2010. “Flat rate sex' brothel owners jailed for fraud.” Accessed May 8, 2017. <https://www.thelocal.de/20100724/28713>.

¹⁴ Havocscope. Global Black Market Information. Prostitution Revenue by Country. Accessed on May 10, 2017. <http://www.havocscope.com/prostitution-revenue-by-country/>.

¹⁵ In 1998, “the International Labor Organization (ILO) recommended that governments legalize prostitution so they could collect some of the revenue.” Since then, “Holland, Germany and New Zealand have taken this route” (Ekis Ekman 2013, 3).

¹⁶ The state of Victoria legalised brothels in 1984 and, ever since then, many other states have legalised or decriminalised brothel prostitution. Revenues from prostitution were reported in 2005-2006 to be about 2.1 billion dollars, an 11% rise on the previous year, according to IBISWorld data from 2007 (Jeffreys 2008, preface to second edition).

made illegal, as that would put women in an even more vulnerable situation. The law aims at targeting pimps, brothel owners and sex buyers, and has increased the resources destined to help prostituted women out. Norway and Iceland adopted the same policy in 2009. Since then, the Nordic model has been applied in Canada (2014), Northern Ireland (2015), France (2016) and the Republic of Ireland (2017). This is the model that has garnered most support from survivors and anti-prostitution feminists worldwide.

Ronald Weitzer has claimed that it is “counterintuitive” to assert prostituted women do not want to legalise prostitution because “why would workers not prefer their work to be legitimized and why would they believe that legalization would increase the risk of harm?” (2010, 24). Such assert is an oversimplification of the lives and thoughts of many women with direct experience of prostitution. Rachel Moran recalls that when she was in prostitution as a teenager, she could not tell if legalisation would make them safer, but if it were to be legalised she knew any daughters they had “would be at greater risk of becoming involved in prostitution if it were given the nod as acceptable by the State” and even if they would be “safer as far as black eyes were concerned”, “no legislative power in the State or anywhere else” could have made them safe “from the mental torment” (2013, 207). Moran's role has been crucial in the implementation of the Nordic model both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland.¹⁷ Alike Kinan, an Argentinian ex-prostituted woman, has also been quoted stating her daughters are a major reason for her abolitionist activism. She made history by being the first survivor who brought her traffickers to court and won the trial.¹⁸ As a white male academic from the “First World” who does not have to do “sex work”, Weitzer defines abolitionism as “counterintuitive”¹⁹ according to his own privileged standards and puts all prostituted women' supposed interests at the service of his own ideology.

¹⁷ The Irish Times. 2015. “The life of an anti-prostitution campaigner.” Accessed on May 9, 2017. <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/the-life-of-an-anti-prostitution-campaigner-1.2230971>.

¹⁸ The dawn. 2016. “Argentina: Alike Kinan, from victim to denouncer of a trafficking network.” Accessed on May, 14, 2017. <http://www.thedawn-news.org/2016/11/15/argentina-alika-kinan-from-victim-to-denouncer-of-a-trafficking-network/>.

¹⁹ Eighty-nine percent of women interviewed by Melissa Farley et al. across nine countries expressed their desire to leave prostitution (2008b, 48). One could argue that what is “counterintuitive” is to regard as “a job like any other” an occupation that so many women would quit if they had the chance.

1. 3. Prostitution as a gendered phenomenon

Ronald Weitzer indistinctively calls anti-prostitution campaigners “prohibitionists” and “advocates of the oppression paradigm” and notes that such individuals are sometimes referred to as “abolitionists” and “radical feminists” (Weitzer 2010, 15). His lexical choices may confuse the reader by masking the gendered character of prostitution. The prohibitionist model criminalises *both* prostituted women and sex buyers.²⁰ Feminists (neither abolitionist nor pro “sex work”) do *not* support the criminalisation of the former. He sets “radical feminists” together with the “nineteenth-century moral paroxysms” and “the morality crusades” of the Victorian era (Rubin 1992) and depicts feminists as sex-hating oppressors. By doing so, he implicitly takes an anti-feminist stand, while advocating for a gender-blind ideology according to which prostitution is aseptic in terms of gender. As Kajsa Ekis Ekman has pointed out, according to the ideology of “sex work” we are not supposed to speak about women and men, but about “sellers” and “customers” (2013, 5). This is “the universal argument” of the contractarian defence, according to which, despite the fact that the majority of people in prostitution are women and girls and the majority of buyers are men, prostitution is a “trade fit for anyone to enter”; that the majority of prostitutes are women is, for contractarians, merely a “contingent fact” (Pateman 1988, 192).

Melissa Farley has defined prostitution as a “gendered survival strategy” which is paradoxically based on “the assumption of unreasonable risks by the person in it”²¹ (Farley 2006, 111). Indeed, “the prostitute” is conventionally pictured as a woman in the collective imaginary because the majority of actual prostitutes are women. That is not a culturally irrelevant social fact. The consequences of such fact are politically meaningful and it deeply affects women's lives worldwide both in practical and symbolic terms. Regardless of the position one is to take in what comes to the legal status of prostitution in a given country, socio-historical conditions must be taken into consideration in the analysis of prostitution-related practices. As Carole Pateman put it:

²⁰ Most of the United States, except some parts of Nevada, where prostitution is decriminalised.

²¹ “Prostitution is 'chosen' as a job by those [women] who have the fewest real choices available to them. Women in legal Dutch prostitution describe it as 'volunteer slavery'” (Farley 2006, 109). Due to social and economic inequality between women and men, women worldwide feel compelled to accept the hazardous conditions prostitution entails in order to survive.

Prostitution is now part of an international sex industry that includes mass-marketing of pornographic books and films, widespread supply of strip-clubs, peep-shows and the like and marketing of sex-tours for men to poor Third World countries. The general display of women's bodies and sexual parts, either in representation or as live bodies, is central to the sex industry and continually reminds men — and women — that men exercise the law of male sex-right, that they have patriarchal right of access to women's bodies. (...) The story of the sexual contract suggests that the latter [the prostitution] demand is part of the construction of what means to be a man, part of the contemporary expression of masculine sexuality. (...) The prostitution contract is another example of an actual 'original' sexual contract. The exemplary display of masculinity is to engage in 'the sex act'. (Hence, sale of men's bodies for homosexual use does not have the same social meaning). The institution of prostitution ensures that men can buy 'the sex act' and so exercise their patriarchal right (Pateman 1988, 199).

Apart from such differences being politically meaningful, there is a very practical reason not to address prostitution as if it were gender neutral and, particularly, to focus on heterosexual sex buyers. Some studies have shown that women and transgender people are more likely than men to experience physical assault and being raped in prostitution (Monto, 2004; Farley and Barkan, 2008a). Martin A. Monto noted that sex buyers' attitudes toward prostitutes and the act of paying for sex need further scholarly attention, as these men are likely to hold beliefs linked to the perpetration of violence against women (2004, 184). Melissa Farley and Howard Barkan concluded that to be female (or to be perceived as female) was to be more intensely targeted for violence (2008, 41). Since being classified as female potentially increases the chances of both entering prostitution and of suffering violence within prostitution, gender *does* qualitatively affect the experience of people working as prostitutes. Therefore, to regard it as if it were “gender neutral” is both idealistic and dangerous.

The figure of the “gigolo”, or male prostitute *in heterosexual encounters*, cannot be justly equated to that of the female prostitute, for he has more autonomy, rarely if ever under the control of pimps, and is not typically exposed to violence. Furthermore,

when it is characteristic of female prostitutes to provide “sexual services” for male sex buyers, the majority of male prostitutes cater to *male* sex buyers as well. Take what the online Amsterdam travel guide currently says about the Red Light district of the city:

[It] is a place where straight men may have sex with women. The women looking for men idea is not very well catered for at all. The place is defiantly aimed at the straight male more than the straight female. Male prostitutes for women are more often seen on side streets and in clubs. Some women ask in male-orientated brothels where they can find a male prostitute. Do not do it within the earshot of a male customer, as the brothel manager will get upset.²²

Meanwhile, the guide explains that the Blue Light district “is for gay people and has grown in size more recently. Gay sex is still stigmatized to a point, but there is certainly a Blue Light area developing. They tried having male prostitutes in the Red Light district in 1995 and it was an epic failure.” Thus, the “sex industry” does not cater to the heterosexual female, and it blatantly ignores the homosexual female — further invisibilising lesbian sexuality as an option while at the same time selling it in a fetishised form for the “male gaze” (Mulvey 1989) both in porn and prostitution. Thus, some studies focus on male prostitution as part of an analysis of the taboo surrounding (male) homosexual identity.

One example of this is the study by Scott et al. (2005). In dealing with violence against male “sex workers”, the authors highlight homophobic violence as the main issue. They state that “while violence towards female sex workers might be understood as having a misogynistic basis, violence towards male sex workers is best understood as having a homophobic or heterosexist basis” (2005, 6). Thus, female prostitutes are stigmatised because they are women, but male sex workers are stigmatised because they are homosexual (or assumed as such by their attackers) which means they are not attacked because they are men, but for representing “an affront to masculinity” (8). Most acts of homophobic violence are perpetrated by “groups of men who are unfamiliar to the victim” (15), while violence of women against male prostitutes is not

²² Amsterdam Travel Guide online. 2014. Accessed April, 13, 2017. <http://www.amsterdamtravelguide.net/general-information/article/rules-red-light-district-blue-light-district-amsterdam>.

reported as an issue. Despite homophobic-based violence, studies conducted in Australia and Argentina, commented by these authors, showed that violence during a commercial sex encounter was a rare event in the experience of most male prostitutes (19). Comparing their data with research on prostitution in nine countries (Canada, Germany, Colombia, Mexico, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, USA, and Zambia) carried out by Melissa Farley and her team, whose findings indicated overwhelming physical and emotional violence in prostitution, suggests there is a qualitative difference between the experiences of male and female prostitutes.²³ The authors noted that many health problems of the interviewees were the direct result of violence in prostitution, and probably also the result of chronic and overwhelming stress (Farley et al. 2008b, 55).

The gendered condition of prostitution is seen also on the Internet. As Susan C. Herring explains, the Internet has been said to be inherently democratic and to offer opportunities for the equal participation of less powerful individuals and members of socially privileged groups, but this claim has been put under question as it tends not to take into account that power relations might actually get transferred online by Internet users. Although the cyberspace has been claimed to be gender-neutral, gendered relations in society as a whole are likely to be reflected online.²⁴ Herring points out that the designers and earliest users of the Internet were white, middle-class men whose norms and values shaped its early culture. Currently, as a product of patriarchal society, the Internet does reproduce the larger societal gender *status quo* that privileges men over women off-line (top-level control of Internet resources, infrastructure, and content is exercised mostly by men; the distribution of pornography is largely controlled by men and casts women as sexual objects for men's use, etc). Herring concludes that the idealistic notions that the Internet would create a gender-blind environment and would level gender-based power asymmetries have received little support from studies carried out on gender and the Internet since the 1980s (2003, 219). This does not mean the Internet has no potential to change the social order, but it has certainly not done so as yet.

²³ In Australia, 3.9% of male prostitutes reported violence. In Argentina, the proportion was even lower, 1.7%. (Scott et al. 2005, 20). Meanwhile, Farley's findings indicated that, across 9 countries, 70% to 95% of women had been physically assaulted and 60% to 75% had been raped in prostitution, and 68% of these respondents met criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in the same range as treatment-seeking combat veterans, battered women seeking shelter, rape survivors, and refugees from state-organised torture (Farley et al. 2008b, 55).

²⁴ For example, as Herring notes, having access to the Internet does not make every type of access socially equivalent and equally meaningful, and viewing a website or posting to a discussion group does not give an individual the same degree of power as creating and administering such website or as the server that hosts the discussion group: "the latter remains the preserve of a technologically skilled and mostly male elite" (2003, 204).

The presence of *some* men working as prostitutes on and off-line have brought some studies to defend “the gender neutrality of sex work as an occupation” (Castle and Lee 2008, 119) but what has been said about prostitution being a gendered phenomenon also holds for Internet facilities. Indeed, as even studies without gender perspective show (Agresti 2007; Castle and Lee 2008) there is a considerable difference between the quantity of female and male “escort services” advertised on the Internet, as it occurs off-line. The websites considered for this paper are not an exception. Men offering “escort services” online are either very few, as opposed to female sexual services on offer (www.escort-Ireland.com), or inexistent (www.PunterNet.com). The huge amount of women in prostitution and the comparatively little quantity of men working as prostitutes (usually for other men) is in part the result of socially and economic unequal conditions that cannot be overlooked. Such difference has been widely documented by feminist work done on prostitution, by showing that prostitutes are mostly women and pointing at the role prostitution plays in protecting the patriarchal *status quo* (Barry, 1979; Pateman, 1988; O'Connell Davidson, 2002; Carter and Giobbe, 2006; Stark, 2006; Farley, 2006; Coy, 2009; Moran, 2013). Kajsa Ekis Ekman has noted that “the story of the sex worker is above all a story of the woman” since, as if selling sex were unidirectional, at the center of the picture “stands *not the man who does the buying*, but the woman who does the selling” (2013, 5, emphasis added). By defending the “right” of women to sell sexual services, Ronald Weitzer implicitly defends men's right to buy them. As a business dominated by the heterosexual white male subject, the sex industry regards *buying* as a privilege that must be protected.

2. Methodology

This study of sex buyers' discourse in online sex-trade websites has been carried out by means of Critical Discourse Analysis. This methodology provides the adequate means to approach the issue in a systematic and critical way because it focuses on the importance of the relationship between discourse and power relations.²⁵ While CDA does not have a unitary theoretical framework, most kinds “will ask questions about the way specific discourse structures are deployed in the reproduction of social dominance” (van Dijk 2015, 253). Van Dijk asserts that many scholars in CDA will be concerned with the notions of power, dominance, ideology, hegemony, social structure, social order, discrimination, gender, class and race (254). For the present analysis, we will deal with some of these concepts.

As van Dijk, David Machin and Andrea Mayr emphasise the political commitment inherent to the task of critical discourse analysts. According to them, the aim of CDA is to reveal ideology buried within a text. These authors also highlight the importance of the relationship between language and power. In this sense, language is a set of resources that are applied to serve certain interests, and the decision as to which resources are to be used in a given communicative event are ideologically relevant. Machin and Mayr note that CDA is mainly concerned with the linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures, rather than with language itself. Critical discourse analysts, they assert, sought to develop methods and theory that could better capture the interrelationship between language, power and ideology and to draw out the practices and conventions in and behind texts that reveal political and ideological investment (2012, 4). These authors insist that CDA wants to expose strategies that appear “normal” or “neutral” on the surface but which may be ideological. This requires paying attention not only to the words that conform the text, but also to things that are communicated but that are *not directly present* in the text, and to look for assumptions and concepts that are being taken for granted.

²⁵ The origins of CDA can be traced in the work of linguists such as Swiss Ferdinand de Saussure (1857 – 1913), known as “the father of modern linguistics”, who wrote on the relation between language and society. The critical theory of the Frankfurt School has also been greatly influential. The work of French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926 - 1984) has been particularly relevant for the analysis of power relations and the production of knowledge through discourse, and therefore for CDA.

2. 1. Language and discourse

Michel Foucault's project is indebted to linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, but his work is much more attentive to historical specificities than the semiotic approach (Hall 2013, 28). He was very much concerned with questions of power and the production of knowledge through discourse and studied discourse as a system of representation. Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language, so it deals with both language and practice. In this model, the “truth” is exposed to be contingent; it is created through discourse and it becomes what at any given time is considered “knowledge.” Power relations have a fundamental role in the production of knowledge because the socially privileged have more opportunities to create (their own) discourse and impose their truth on others. There are certain rules and practices that produce regulated discourse at a given historical period.

Language use, discourse, verbal interactions, and communication belong to the microlevel of the social order (van Dijk 2015, 468). They are part of what Foucault called “microphysics of power.” They include all the subtle ways, either implicit or explicit, through which power relations get enacted, reproduced and legitimated at a smaller scale. *Power, dominance, and inequality* between social groups belong to a macrolevel of analysis. According to van Dijk, CDA has to theoretically bridge the “gap” between the micro and the macrolevel in order to make explicit the connection between all those practices belonging to the microphysics of power and social order as such (2015, 468). Power and dominance are organised socially, politically and culturally. They are institutionalised. The social dominance of groups is enacted individually by its group members and it is supported by other members of that group (microlevel), but also sanctioned by the courts, legitimated by laws, enforced by the police, and ideologically sustained and reproduced by the media or textbooks (macrolevel) (1993, 255).

David Machin and Andrea Mayr sustain discourse is language in real contexts of use. These authors believe discourses and ideologies are not only found in official and media texts: “Social Semiotics views the individual as embedded in networks of social relations where all of us are communicating, making signs through semiotic choices” (2012, 26). As mentioned above, they maintain that CDA is concerned with exposing

ideologies that are hidden within language, whether these are produced “by authorities, ruling groups, institutions or face-to-face situations” (15). This notion of *discourse* is very wide and includes any kind of communicative event or situation. These authors emphasise that analysis of discourse should be based on the carefully detailed description of the “semiotic choices” found in talk, texts and images, because choosing one linguistic element over other might suggest different identities, values or activities on the part of social actors (2012, 26).

2. 2. The relationship between power and discourse

Michel Foucault stated that power does not emanate from the person of the prince in Machiavelli’s sense (*The Prince*, 1513). Power manifests itself in many different ways; it is not located in one specific, physical place, but dispersed and decentralised. The exercise of power, he asserts, is a way in which certain actions modify others: “Power exists only when it is put into action” (Foucault 1983, 219). That is, power exists when it acts upon individuals, structuring their potential field of actions through certain specific mechanisms. Power relations are well entrenched, rooted deep in the system of social networks, not reconstituted “above” society (1983, 222). Power is exercised “from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations” (Foucault 1990, 94). Foucault represented power as an essentially productive force. It is a form of power that makes individuals *subjects*. Relations of power do not take place in a position of exteriority with respect to economic processes, knowledge relationships and sexual relations. Power relationships have an “immediate hold” upon the body (Foucault 1979, 11) and a “strictly relational character” (1990, 95). They depend on “a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations” (1990, 95). In this model, the presence of power sets the conditions for resistance. The aim of any type of resistance is attacking a form of domination.

According to van Dijk, social power is defined in terms of control. The *social power* of groups or institutions is based on privileged *access* to resources that are socially valued, such as status, group membership, education or knowledge (1993, 255). Power involves control by one group over other groups. Socially privileged groups

ensure their dominance both at a structural and symbolic level, such as post-colonial discourses based on the supposedly biological and cultural inferiority of subjugated people that aims at convincing them of the need of their own subjection. Indeed, a powerful group is able, not only to limit the freedom of action of others, but also to influence their minds as a means of control (1993, 254). As van Dijk puts it, “modern and often more effective power is mostly cognitive, and enacted by persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation, among other strategic ways to *change the mind of others in one's own interests*” (1993, 254, emphasis added).

Dominated groups may resist, accept, condone, comply with, or legitimate such power, and even find it “natural”, van Dijk asserts. Dominance may be enacted and reproduced by subtle, routine, everyday forms of text and talk that are considered normal and acceptable. Critical discourse analysts should take “an explicit sociopolitical stance” for such analysis implies a “political critique of the individuals responsible for its perversion in the reproduction of dominance and the perpetuation of inequality” (1993, 253). David Machin and Andrea Mayr also highlight that power comes from privileged access to social resources such as education, knowledge and wealth, which provides authority, status and influence to those who gain this access and enables them to dominate subordinate groups (2012, 24).

2. 3. Applied methodology

For Critical Discourse Analysis, it is fundamental to answer questions that enable us to identify the relation between the social actors who produce discourse, the receivers, the object of discourse and the context in which any given communicative event takes place. Meriel and Thomas Bloor have formulated the following orientating question(s): *Who is talking to whom about what? Why? What is their purpose? What effect are they having (or trying to have)?* Such questions are a good starting point to begin identifying all the elements at play. These authors define *discourse domain* as the socially recognised context within which the discourse takes place (2007, 8) and *discourse community* as an extension of the idea of speech community, which refers to communities where the people concerned may meet frequently or rarely or sometimes not at all, but still communicate and develop specific discourses.

Such is the case of the type of communities formed by people who share similar hobbies or interests, including *virtual communities* which have come to exist with the development of technology (2007, 9). People within different domains engage in certain social practices, and they are referred to as *actors*. Social practices involve human behaviours that follow socially established conventions within which the actors have a different degree of freedom and opportunities. The authors point out that to engage in certain social practices it is necessary to develop a set of skills and knowledge inherent to the way a given social practice works. The knowledge that is used by participants in a communicative act is called socially shared knowledge (also known as mutual knowledge) (2007, 17).

The discourse domain of this project is the website PunterNet, which provides the online terrain for the formation of a virtual community of certain social actors (sex buyers) with a discourse community characteristic of the social practice of “buying sex.” Specifically, through the review system structured by PunterNet, these men are sharing with other male sex buyers their experiences of buying sex from girls and women in prostitution. To a lesser extent, we can say the women and girls that the men produce discourse about are also social actors of this context, although indirectly, since the very review system is made not *by* or *for* them, but *about* them (something that, as we will see in the next chapter, is regarded as *positive* within the language of the website). Indeed, the discourse is produced *by* and *for* sex buyers. The communicative event consists mainly in putting into written words their lived experiences as consumers of prostitution. Thus, women and girls are made *passive* social actors as well as the *object* of the discourse that is been produced about them. This answers the question: *Who is talking to whom about what?* Although, in this case, it should rather be “*Who is talking to whom about whom?*”

Socially shared knowledge incorporates issues of identity and power (2007, 18). Observing how sex buyers communicate with other sex buyers is likely to reveal their socially shared values and interests. This is formed by a range of (pre)assumptions (notions that are taken for granted to be objective by the social actors) that form the whole set of beliefs of the community of sex buyers about prostituted women and girls, about what implies the act of *paying for sex*, their *entitlement* (as us: men) to receive what they call a “good service” (from them: women) and their *right* to react badly when

they get (what they consider to be) a “bad service.” It can be said that all this set of beliefs and attitudes is inherent to the way the social practice of “buying sex” works and that in a great deal shapes the different discourses that aim at legitimating prostitution as a whole, as well as the attitudes of men toward women.

In analysing the discourses *produced by* men (sex buyers) about (prostituted) women, attention will be paid to the “discursive strategies for the maintenance of inequality” (van Dijk 1993, 250). As Sheila Jeffreys has pointed out: “An 'idea of prostitution' needs to exist in the heads of individual men to enable them to conceive of buying women for sex. This is the idea that a woman exists to be so used, that it is a possible and appropriate way to use her. A necessary component of this idea is that it will be sexually exciting to so use a woman” (2008, 3). We believe the perspective of critical discourse analysts should be that of those who suffer most from dominance and inequality, as van Dijk has defended, and that the critical targets should be the (in this case, patriarchal) power elites that enact, sustain, legitimate, condone or ignore social inequality and injustice. In this sense, CDA should deal with the discourse dimensions of power abuse and the injustice and inequality that result from it. Therefore, a core piece of the present work is solidarity with “those who need it most”; in this case, with women as members of a socially subordinated group. As van Dijk puts it, “critical scholars should not worry about the interests or perspectives of those in power, who are best placed to take care of their own interests anyway” (1993, 253).

2. 4. Field-work procedure

For this analysis, the following six websites belonging to the European English-speaking territory were considered, all of them providing service in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland: www.AdultWork.com, www.Backpage.co.uk, www.Irishindependentescorts.com, www.PunterNet.com, www.UKpunting.com and www.escort-Ireland.com. The feature that these sites have in common is that they advertise individual female “escort services” for individual sex buyers. As Irish journalist Stephen Rogers has pointed out, there is a clear distinction between sites that advertise a particular brothel and those that claim “they are only advertising sites on which escorts and brothels advertise themselves” (Rogers 2009, 20). After some initial

consideration, the first three were discarded using criteria based on popularity among users, and specifically, for their reliability. For example, Rogers states that www.escort-Ireland.com credibly claims to be Ireland's leading escort site for its high activity suggests it is more popular than its main competition, www.Irishindependentescorts.com (Rogers 2009, 20). In a personal communication, Sheila Crowley, from Ruhama, and Irish journalist Rachel Moran have expressed the same opinion to me.

The sex buyers themselves have made similar comments in different forums suggesting the reliability of certain websites over others. These men do not trust newcomers that do not use their own terminology/slang, nor reviews that seem “fake” or written by a “white knight.”²⁶ For example, a sex buyer commented on a review in www.UKpunting.com: “I mainly see ladies from escort Ireland or adult work don't think I will use backpage again.” Another one wrote “I haven't tried backpage yet as it seems full of fakes, usually stick to EI [Escort-Ireland] or AW [Adult Work].” Comments such as the ones mentioned were taken into account in the decision to disregard www.Backpage.co.uk. Along a similar line, as we will see, “Galahad”, the administrator of PunterNet, announced on his site that when www.Adultwork.com was created in early 2003, a total of 119 reviews with links to the site were submitted within a short period of time: “IP address and writing style analysis led to the conclusion that almost all were written by the same couple of people, presumably the site's owners, in an attempt to drive traffic to their site. (...) Positive reviews on AW may be self-written and photos may not be of the actual person you will meet.”²⁷ This accusation was also crucial to choose PunterNet over the AdultWork site, as the former raised suspicion of “dishonest practices” on the part of the latter.

Finally, two more of the preselected websites, www.UKpunting.com and www.escort-Ireland.com, were disregarded for the final analysis. The amount of reviews provided by PunterNet alone was large enough to offer an overwhelmingly wide sample (26509 “Positive”, 2966 “Negative” and 292 “Neutral”), and data collected from it

²⁶ The so-called “PuntingWiki” offers a glossary made by/for sex buyers with terms they frequently use in communities such as the one in PunterNet. For practical reasons, from now on we will refer to those definitions whenever a term typical of their communicative register appears. Thus, according to it, a *white knight* is a “popular internet slang for a forum member that rushes to a [sic] defend a prostitute after she has been poorly reviewed. He might not have seen her or could be a pimp.” Accessed March 25, 2017. <https://www.puntingwiki.com/wiki/Glossary>.

²⁷ PunterNet. Accessed March 30, 2017. <http://www.punternet.com/forum/index.php?/topic/14232-adultwork-directory-site/>.

seemed to suffice for this type of analysis. In the reviews, sex buyers produce discourse specifically about the women. The community forum was disregarded for its miscellaneous and unstructured character. After considering an approximate number of 200 reviews, 60 reviews were selected as a manageable sample and analysed. Thirty were labelled as “positive” and thirty as “negative” (“Recommended”, “Not recommended”, respectively). The selection criteria were:

- the amount of information provided;
- gathering as many different commented aspects as possible in order to identify those that are consensually valued within this community;
- looking for representative samples that would help to find the patterns and characteristics of the positive/negative dichotomous way of reviewing women.

The analysis consisted on a close look at the lexical choices of sex buyers to recount their encounter with prostituted women: the verb forms (active, passive) as well as the connotations attached to the chosen verbs; the type of nouns used to refer to themselves and to their peer virtual group / and those used to portray the women and the way they regard women as a group; the adjectives linked to qualities regarded as “positive” and as “negative”, and the reasons for such categorisation from their point of view, etc. In judging the whole picture, the information overtly revealed, as well as the way they chose to reveal it, were considered of as much importance as details that seem to be absent from the text. The data collected reveal the type of information they provide systematically and the one that they do not provide at all, or very rarely, and their possible motivation for doing so is addressed critically.

2. 4. A note on terminology

In the language of the PunterNet site, the women and girls advertised are either called “service providers”, “escorts”, or “ladies.” “Escorts” are understood to work mostly indoors and charge higher than street prostitutes, who are usually called simply “prostitutes”, “streetwalkers” or, more pejoratively, “hookers.” There is an implicit class bias in the term, which aims at making indoor prostitution look classier than street prostitution.²⁸ This can be terribly misleading since many women and girls in

²⁸ The PunterWiki site does not define the term “escort”, but defines “courtesan” as the “Title used by 'High Class' escorts *to justify* their higher prices and more limited range of services” (emphasis added). The term “call girl” is treated as synonym with “outcall prostitute.”

prostitution report to have worked and/or currently be working both indoors *and* outdoors. For example, the girls and women of Maddy Coy's study (2009) reported to work both in street and in indoor prostitution. Irish journalist Rachel Moran recounts to have done so herself during the seven years she was involved in it and addresses critically the class bias of such term, which makes some women who call themselves "escorts" to look down on women working the streets, as if "the work" were essentially different (2013, 151). Carter and Giobbe have said: "Put simply, whether you're a "high-class" call girl or a street walkin' ho, when you're on a "date" you gotta get your knees or lay on your back and let that man use your body any way he wants to. That's why he pays for" (2006, 35). Furthermore, Melissa Farley has noted that it is an error to assume that the privilege of so-called "high-class call girls" protects them from the exploitation and violence that exists in prostitution. For example, in Chicago, the same frequency of rape was reported by women in both escort and street prostitution (Farley 2006, 121).

The term "ladies" is a deliberate euphemism on the part of the website since, traditionally, "lady" is a word used to show respect(ability) to a (non-prostituted) woman and it intends to put the light on her social value which, circularly, is defined by her respectability. Words used either to confirm or to deny the (patriarchal definition of) respectability of a woman are at the service of the Madonna/Whore dichotomy, and the word "lady" is placed in the first part of that spectrum. Conversely, the words "prostitute" together with the more pejorative ones such as "whore", "slut", "bitch" are generally used as insults both against prostituted and non-prostituted women. In the collective imaginary, the word "lady" would never be associated a woman in prostitution. The site plays precisely with that dichotomic sexist belief in order to make their place look classy. It is worth noting that, when derogatory terms such as "whore" or "bitch" are carefully avoided in the discourse of the website, sex buyers may use such terms freely both in the community and in the reviews.

Language is important in aligning a text with a particular ideology and perspective. On the issue of terminology, Sheila Jeffreys has pointed out the importance of the term "sex work" in naturalising men's purchase for sex and her intention of separating her approach from those trying to legitimate prostitution. She does not consider men's behaviour in choosing to use women in prostitution to be something natural, biology-driven, but a behaviour that has been socially constructed out of men's

dominance and women's subordination (2008, 3). She says a term equivalent to *batterer* and *rapist* should be created to keep the light on buyers as perpetrators of prostitution, but finds no effective term available that identifies the abusive behaviour. In this paper, the selection of terminology that may somehow condone men's abuse of women is explicitly rejected.

While deciding the way men who purchase sex were going to be addressed, the following terms were considered: “client”, “customer”, “punter”, “john”, “sex buyer”, “prostitutor.” The two first words were disregarded because they are part of the ideology behind the normalisation of women's *potential* abuse in prostitution as just “work.” The term “punter” was not further considered for being the main chosen name by sex buyers to call themselves in PunterNet and for its multi-levelled meanings, which suggest sport and game-related activities and a relation with “placing a bet”, and thus trivialises the act of paying for sex. On the term “john”, Sheila Jeffreys has noted it is a word created by prostituted women that entails that the men who buy sex are “generic males, indistinguishable one from another” (2008, 3). This term will be used occasionally. The most favoured terms were the two last mentioned. “Sex buyer”²⁹ emphasises his role as *buyer*, and therefore stresses his economic power, something overlooked by all the previous terms. Along the same line, Rachel Moran has suggested the term “prostitutor”, which keeps the light on the man who pays for the prostitution contract to take place:

Wherever a woman is prostituted, there are also the men who prostitute her. There is a word to refer to them, in the context of their actions, but that word is not in common usage at the time of this writing. Therefore I would like people to pay attention to the term 'prostitutor' in the body of this text. It has been deliberately included here to refer to those men who have, until now, carried out a specific behaviour without having to bear the weight of the term that describes it (Moran 2013, 98).

When considering the way to refer to the women, words used typically by prostitutes

²⁹ The PuntingWiki notes: “Sex Buyer: A term for a punter coined by misandristic feminazis like Julie Bindell [sic].”

(such as “working girl”, “lady”, or “babe”) including derogatory ones (like “whore” or “bitch”), as can be found in the reviews of PunterNet, were not considered. The following terms were taken into consideration: “sex worker”³⁰, “escort”, “call girl”, “prostitute”, “prostituted women.” The two first ones were disregarded because they belong to the terminology that intends to normalise prostitution. As Sheila Jeffreys has highlighted: “Prostitutes are visible in a way johns are not (...). The term 'prostituted women' brings perpetrators into the picture: somebody must be doing something to the woman for her to be 'prostituted'” (2008, 3). Because of this, “prostituted women” was generally favoured over “prostitute.” Above all, such expression is intended to refer to women in prostitution primarily by their condition of *women* in a patriarchal context, rather than by their condition of *prostitutes*.³¹

The assumption that a distinction can be legitimately made between “prostitutes” and “other women” is false and damaging. Margaret A. Baldwin has brilliantly addressed how problematic it is when feminists use the Madonna/Whore dichotomy without realising they are doing so. In a society where “to be [regarded as] a whore” is equated to *deserve* men's violence, to try “to disidentify a sexual violence victim from the status of prostitute by distinguishing her behaviour from at least one of the legal elements of prostitution” (1992, 116) symbolically reinforces the gendered specificity of prostitutes' status as “[society's] 'safe' objects of eroticized violence and misogynist hatred” (2006, 126). The use of the expression “prostituted women” intends to make the point that *the only difference* between prostituted and non-prostituted women is the fact that the former are directly involved in prostitution and the latter are not.

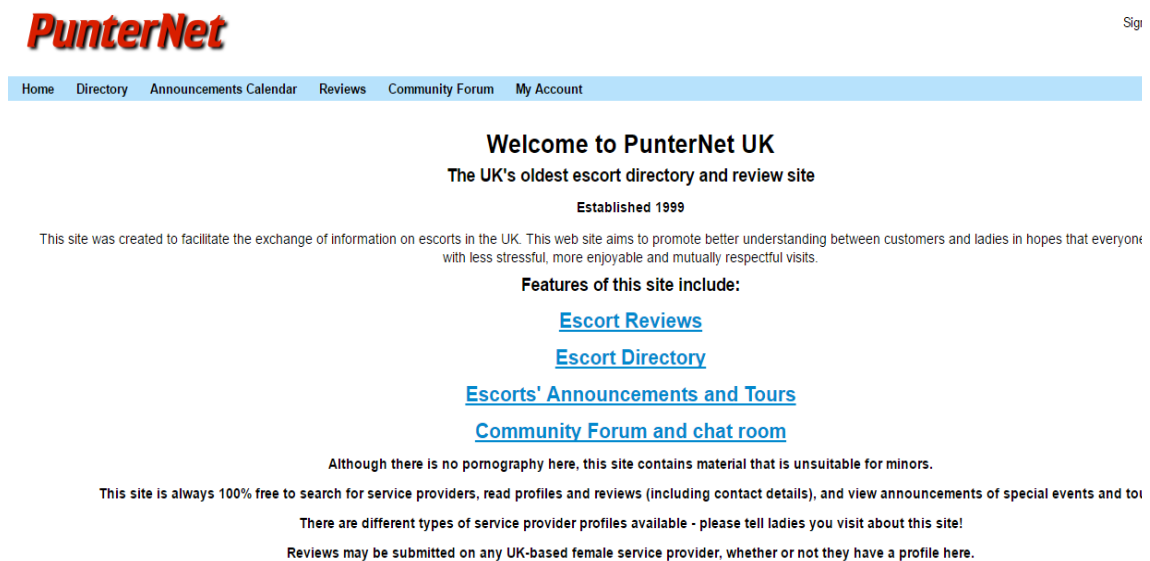
³⁰ On the term “sex worker”, the PunterWiki states: “A euphemism for prostitute, but also includes, webcam girls, picture sellers and porn stars.” This suggests they do not attach to it the same connotations that it has for pro-sex work feminists.

³¹ Ine Vanwesenbeeck has quoted Gail Pheterson noting “Whores are being reduced to one image, that neither encompasses mother nor wife, while clients are supposed to represent 'the secret side of every man'. While prostitutes are being reduced to 'whores', the 'john' is being seen as an individual with a certain identity, who also visits prostitutes” (cited in Vanwesenbeeck 2001, 246). Prostitution is something circumstantial and contingent in any woman's life, not something inherent to her “essence” or self.

3. Website analysis

3.1. General Description

www.PunterNet.com was created in 1999 “to facilitate the exchange of information on escorts” in the United Kingdom, according to their own claim. It presents itself as “The UK's oldest escort directory and review site.” Over the years, it has gained a good reputation among users. A potential sex buyer can easily find it by typing “escorts” and the location. For example, it comes up among the first five entries that appear in Google by typing “escorts” and “England.” This exemplifies how the Internet makes the purchase of prostitution services easier than ever. The homepage of the website features a white background, with *PunterNet* in medium-sized red letters on the right corner. The introductory text is in black font. The links to the main sections are highlighted in light blue and they are placed in the very centre. There are not images of any kind in this section, neither pornographic nor of the “escorts.” The first appreciation that can be made by a potential sex buyer is that the site is sober and organised in a simple way so that the needs of the user are met easily. The highlighted sections are “Escort Reviews”, “Escort Directory”, “Escorts' Announcements and Tours” and “Community Forum.” It declares to be: “100% free to search for service providers, read profiles and reviews (including contact details), and view announcements of special events and tours.” The image shown below is a screenshot of the homepage of PunterNet.



3. 1. 1. Directory

The first section we will comment on is the so-called “Service Provider Directory.” The section opens with an introductory briefing where the user can find reasons to regard the site as a very good option for someone who wants to purchase sexual services online, as well as some user tips. In this way, the website advertises itself as part of a marketing strategy based on their commitment to sex buyers' expectations. PunterNet sells itself as paradigmatic of what is regarded as “honest practices”, which in this context is synonym with being accommodating to the men's needs. An example of a “dishonest practice” is advertising sexual services with a woman but putting up pictures that are inaccurate in terms of real age or physical traits, for being too photoshopped, or that feature a woman other than the one really advertised. As previously mentioned, the Adultwork.com site is pointed by PunterNet as a website where such dishonest practices happen often. All the reviews that state a woman was contacted through AdultWork.com provides the link to the discussion that addressed this issue in the PunterNet community forum. By calling other websites out for that, PunterNet places itself in a privileged, surveillance-like position in the eyes of potential sex buyers, who value highly the accuracy of the pictures of the women they may purchase for sex. By appealing to their own reliability, it intends to attract the men as well as the announcers.

In the language of the website, the women are never called “prostitutes.” They are usually called “service providers” instead. By the use of such terminology, PunterNet declares overtly the assumption according to which prostitution is like any other job, and equates the purchase of sex to the purchase of any other “service.” This assumption is central to the pro-prostitution lobby and is inseparably linked to the ideology that aims at legitimating the commodification of sex (understood as a male terrain) and of women's bodies being treated like any other — lifeless — product. The terminology of pro-sex work feminists is nonetheless strictly avoided. Thus, neither “sex worker” nor “sex work” is ever used in the language of the site. The word “escort” is used often as well, as mentioned in the previous chapter. This euphemistic term shifts the emphasis from the selling/buying sex dynamic and places it on the act of “escorting”, as if that were the act of “providing company” what is being purchased and sex may (or may not) occur after a man pays an “escort” for her time. It is a conscious

attempt at making prostitution look glamorous. The term is deliberately misleading for, in spite of intending to keep the light off from buying sex, it is assumed without mistake throughout the site that escorts are purchased for sex by men, and not for mere company.

The differential treatment of the men and the women on the part of PunterNet becomes evident in this section. It is emphasised several times that male users do not have to pay anything to access the women's contact details and the reviews. The language of the website highlights as a positive factor that “service providers” *cannot* keep sex buyers from reviewing them. This, it is said, is to “ensure that the majority of *scammers* and *poor-quality providers* will avoid this site” (emphasis added). PunterNet makes clear that if service providers are found to have written or solicited fake reviews, they will be barred from advertising with them. “Galahad”, the administrator, states that “Ladies who represent themselves honestly and provide a good service should be encouraged to sign up for a profile on PunterNet, as *that will show the world* that they are most likely *genuine* and *motivated to give a good service*” (emphasis added). Additionally, he regards as negative the fact that within the AdultWork site the women have the option of not showing their reviews online and that “reviewers are themselves subject to reviews, [which] means that many clients who would like to write a negative review will not do so for fear of reprisals.”³² Therefore, it is inferable that the site's main concern is with the (male) users and certainly not with the (female) “service providers.” Indeed, the very name of the site speaks of such preference.

Thus, the men are the ones receiving protection from the PunterNet, instead of the women announced in it, even though the revenues of the site come from the latter. Indeed, sex buyers can make a completely free use of PunterNet, while the announcers sustain it financially. This contributes to the male entitlement to buy sex, as the system itself highlights the act of *buying* as a privilege. The implicitly derogatory treatment of PunterNet toward the women adds to the exploitative conditions under which they are placed by the very site. The presence of expressions such as *poor-quality providers* or *genuine and motivated to give a good service* suggest that there are sort of *objective*³³

³² PunterNet. Accessed April 2, 2017. <http://www.punternet.com/forum/index.php?/topic/14232-adultwork-directory-site/>.

³³ Here, *objective* stands for what the online peer group formed by the sex buyers of PunterNet take for granted to be “objective” conditions. The quality they attach to the sexual services of a given prostituted woman is, therefore, a subjective construction which is *assumed* to be objective. As we will see, expressions such as “good service”, “bad service” and “basic services”, which are found often within their discourse, relates to that.

conditions that dedices the *quality* of the sexual services of the women and girls they purchase for sex. The analysis of the reviews will be crucial to understanding what a good-quality versus a poor-quality service provider means within this community.

Home Directory Announcements Calendar Reviews Community Forum My Account

Find Providers
Use the search criteria below to narrow your search. Leaving all the items under a particular heading unselected will leave that section out of the search.

- ▶ Location
- ▶ Likes
- ▶ Provider Types
- ▶ Ethnicity
- ▶ National Origin
- ▶ Age
- ▶ Size
- ▶ Text
- ▶ Availability
- ▶ Keywords

Do Search

Clear Search

Quick Links

Service Provider Directory

The directory for professional service providers and discerning clients

What makes the PunterNet Service Provider Directory superior to the others?

- The system is completely free to the users - you will never have to pay to view a provider's contact details.
- PunterNet respects your privacy - you do not even have to register an account here in order to search the Directory and read reviews.
- Service providers do not have the option not to have their reviews published. Reviews are only deleted if there is clear evidence that they are delibe provider in question is no longer working. This policy alone will ensure that the majority of scammers and poor-quality providers will avoid this site.
- Any service provider who is found to have written or solicited fake reviews, or who has published photos which were not of the ladies being advertise barred from advertising here.
- No pay-per-view photo galleries, no fake profiles of non-existent ladies, no complicated online booking system to put your privacy at risk, NO NONSE providers who want to meet real clients!

Hints for doing searches

The database fields for ethnicity, national origin, age, and size, are applied only to profiles for individual ladies. Since agencies/parlours will have a vari stats, there is no way to apply those fields to agency/parlour profiles. This means that if you search on any of those fields, your search results will inclu individual ladies, not for agencies/parlours.

Keywords - New Feature

The search criteria for johns to find the girl/woman they want to purchase sex from are: Location, Likes,³⁴ Provider Types, Ethnicity, Age, Size, Text (to search specific words), Availability, and Keywords. In March 2017, 497 providers were found (210 listed as “Independents”, 282 as “Agencies/ Parlours” and 5 “Party Organizers”). Pictures of the women show them often half naked or in underwear, on a bed or posing. Some have their faces blurred, but most do not. The descriptions written by *or* about the women vary widely. They focus on physical and character traits (i. e. “I am charming, discrete, passionate, very feminine, sexy and elegant”), it is often emphasised that they *do* enjoy sex during the commercial exchange (i. e. “My body is responsive in a classic intimate girlfriend experience”³⁵) and in what they offer/ do not offer (i. e. “I DO NOT offer

³⁴ This refers to a long list of sexual practices, such as “Fingering, Anal - Receiving”, “Fingering, Vaginal - Receiving”, “Fisting - Giving”, “Fisting, Anal - Receiving”, “Fisting, Vaginal - Receiving”, “Intercourse - Anal / Oral / Vaginal”, “Kissing - closed lips / French”, “Lunch/Dinner Dates”, “Oral – CIM [cum in mouth]”, “Oral without condom”, “Overnights”, etc.

³⁵ This “service” is often mentioned by sex buyers in the reviews too. The PuntingWiki defines it in the following way: “GFE: Girlfriend Experience - an escort experience like being with a real girlfriend. There is no agreed list of services included, but you expect kissing or DFK [“Deep French Kissing - Passionate kissing with tongue deep in the other person's mouth”], oral sex and full sex. It does not include the more adventurous services you would expect from a PSE or fetish services.” The “PSE” (Porn Star Experience) is said to be “a more adventurous, raunchy experience with an escort with which usually includes deep throat or gagging, and maybe anal sex. Quite often escorts offering this service will charge more than GFE escorts.” On the so-called “girlfriend experience”, Melissa Farley has pointed out that some of the sex buyers they interviewed “wanted prostitution to

Bareback³⁶, Anal (receiving), Spanking / Submission (receiving), No withheld or private numbers!”), etc.

In the advertisements made by escorts classified as “Independent” it is usual to find that they stress how much they like sex and getting paid for it. There are instances where the language and the tone suggest the text may have been written by other individual than the women who is advertised. Since, as we will see, the presence of pimps is reported in the reviews by sex buyers themselves, it is particularly difficult to tell if a pimp may be behind the description of the advertisement.³⁷ The prices depend on the criteria of the “service provider”, whether this is an “independent escort”, an agency, or a “party organizer.” For example, Abby69escort, an agency based in London which promises “New Girls Daily”, is announced on PunterNet in the following terms:

Gorgeous New Ladies Added Every Week. Great Selection of very open-minded London Escorts as well as ladies new to Escorting. Eastern European - Polish Czech Russian etc, British Escorts, Latin/ South American, Asian Escorts. Incalls and outcalls in central London. From Full Pro [professional] PSE [Pornstar experience] to shy and new in business GFE [Girlfriend experience]. Plz [sic] visit our web gallery for over 100 London ladies, dont hesitate to call/txt for any advice and honest recommendation (...) Basic Hourly Rate: £150 - some services may be extra.

They provide a link to their own website, email, phone number, and sometimes even Twitter account details. In this case, it is necessary to access it to find out that their prices range from £150 to £600, a percentage of which shall be kept by the agency. Prices of independent escorts vary. For example, one who advertises herself as “Thai

be like having a girlfriend except they wanted her to be a girlfriend with no feelings who made no demands on them and who would automatically be aroused by every sex act they demanded” (2011a, 29).

³⁶ Intercourse without condom.

³⁷ For example, there is “Pregnant Kinky Girl”, whose description states: “Before I fell pregnant I was very kinky and the sex I would have could be described either as the GFE [Girlfriend Experience], PSE [Pornstar Experience] or Submissive. Now that I am almost 9 months pregnant I have noticed that my sex drive has gotten much higher and the sensation is much different. I feel as am having adventure of trying sex all over again for the first time. x ~Abby.” On her profile there are several pictures of her, half naked, where the potential sex buyer can observe the advanced state of her pregnancy. In the FAQs section she answers back to one user that she is almost 9 months pregnant indeed. Some advertisements have extremely graphic content. For instance, one announces “Delicious Pussy, Perfectly Reacts To Each Tongue Like Magic To Satisfy All Who Pleasure Her X.” It provides “amateur” pictures of a young girl taking pictures with her phone in front of a mirror as well as some pictures of female genitalia, along with the text “She’s hungry!”

Lady” offers one hour per £50, while “Submissive Summer – Submissive services” offers one hour per £200 and states also that “some services may be extra.” Apart from the “escorts” listed, there is a section that takes the user to www.flirt4free.com, a website that charges men for live chats with girls.

The screenshot shows the PunterNet website interface. At the top left is the logo "PunterNet" in red. To the right are links for "Sign In" and "Regi". Below the logo is a navigation bar with links: Home, Directory, Announcements Calendar, Reviews, Community Forum, and My Account. The main content area is divided into a left sidebar and a main listing area. The sidebar contains a "Find Providers" section with search criteria like Location, Likes, Provider Types (Independent, Agencies/Parlours, Party Organizers), Ethnicity, National Origin, Age, Size, Text, Availability, and Keywords. There are "Do Search" and "Clear Search" buttons, and a "Quick Links" section with "Last Updated Profiles". The main listing area shows "213 providers found" and "Page 1 of 22". It lists several providers with their names, locations, and brief descriptions, each accompanied by a small photo and a "LIVE" indicator. The providers listed are: "High Class Busty Independent Escort" (Earls Court, Kensington), "Rosalie O'connor" (Central London), "Kristina - 6ft Blonde Escort" (Huddersfield), and "Chloe - Independent English Redhead" (Milton Keynes).

3. 1. 2. Announcements Calendar

The Announcements Calendar is a section where “independent escorts” and the so-called escort agencies can further advertise themselves. They can be found by entering dates, provider types (divided in “Independent Escorts”, “Agencies/Parlours” and “Party organizers”) and the geographic location. This aims at accommodating to the wide range of the potential sex buyer's desires. In March 2017, 294 announcements were found that had been made by Agencies/Parlours. They provide pictures of the girls/women working in their premises and a phone number to make a booking with them. One example is *Supreme Angels London* announcing “Sexy Spanish Teen - 19 Yr Old Clarissa: Clarissa is young & hot. A beautiful teen angel, Clarissa is a real cutie. She is sweet & sexy and with her Spanish eyes, she will entice you into doing naughty stuff. Come and see this little bad girl for some good fun.” As in this case, many of them sell the buyers the Madonna/Whore dichotomy with expressions such as “little bad girl.” The emphasis on her youth is also evident through words such as “19 Y r”, “young”, “teen” and “little.” Some of the most common adjectives used to describe girls and women are: young,

teen, beautiful, sexy, hot, glamorous, classy, refined, elegant, sweet, friendly, communicative, and defined as having a perfect, “feminine” body.

Other agencies focus only on the physical traits rather than on creating the phantasy of the escorts' especial personality for the johns. In such cases, they provide details that may include age, height, breast size, dress size, hair colour, nationality, language, location, postcode and availability. They also sum up the sexual services on offer with the standard price and the extra price for some of them, which are called “extras.” For example, one agency announces: “Services: OWO [Oral without condom], CIM [Cum in mounth], CIF [Cum in face], DFK (Deep French kiss), Domination, Massage, WS [Watersports³⁸], FK [Frech Kiss], Toys, GFE [Girlfriend Experience], Party girl, COB [Cum on breasts/body], Couples, (WS [Watersports] receiving + [£]50, CIF [Cum in face] +100, Couple +100, Swallow [men's ejaculation] +100, Filming and fotos with covered face +100).” As we can see, when sexual practices are regarded as “services”, they can be listed separately and divided by prices. The body part of the woman where the man is to ejaculate sets the line between one “service” and other and may entail a difference in the final payment. In this case, oral sex without a condom is included in the hourly rate, and to ejaculate on the woman's face raises the price to £100 more, as well as to have her swallow it.

Service Provider Announcements Calendar

Special Events, Announcements, and Tours

The old Announcements and Tours have been combined into this new Calendar

Filter the display of Calendar items (optional):

Earliest Date: Choose Clear

Latest Date: Choose Clear

Provider Types: Independent Escorts Agencies/Parlours Party Organizers

Geographic: Post Code City Name Search Text: Radius (miles):

Sort Order: Posting Date Event Date

294 entries found

Click on an Announcement Calendar item to see its full text

Clarise - Unforgettable Adventure & Relaxing Sunday! Profile: Vvaescorts	19 Mar 2017 — 26 Mar 2017 Posted 19 Mar 2017
M A R I A N G E L A - New Long Legged Russian & Extreme Profile: 'Top British - Sugarbabes International'	19 Mar 2017 — 26 Mar 2017 Posted 19 Mar 2017
K A T E - Mega Busty English Mature With Class Profile: 'Top British - Sugarbabes International'	19 Mar 2017 — 26 Mar 2017 Posted 19 Mar 2017
N E S S Y - New Busty Blonde From Spain Profile: 'Top British - Sugarbabes International'	19 Mar 2017 — 26 Mar 2017 Posted 19 Mar 2017
L A U R E N - Natural 32FF Mature Ex Playboy Model! Profile: 'Top British - Sugarbabes International'	20 Mar 2017 — 27 Mar 2017 Posted 19 Mar 2017

³⁸ The Punting Wiki explains: “The act of urinating on someone or being urinated on. Watersports can also involve urine drinking.”

In this section, escorts classified as Independents (24 listed in March 2017) write the announcements in the first person, in opposition to the agencies, which *usually* use the third person. However, there are exceptions when the agency intends to feed the illusion that the text has been written by her. For example, agency *London Submissive Babes* writes “I am 20 years old, new to the scene but I love to play. I am a well educated and sweet French girl who loves nothing more than to serve, play and misbehave... I wish to be your dream come true ultimate devoted servant... I am 5'7” tall with a slender figure and a very peachy, spankable bottom. I also have long wavy dark hair, which is particularly suitable for pulling when you feel the need to put me in my place (...).” As in cases like the one just mentioned, the male fantasy of “punishing bad girls” is often put for sale through PunterNet. This occurs because sex buyers demand that fantasy, which entails not only that it is acceptable but also erotic to put a woman “in her place” when she “misbehaves”, even through violent acts such as pulling her hair. The underlying idea is that it is erotic to be violent against women and that women enjoy being punished at the whim of a man, in spite of the service not being described as sadomasochistic. This fantasy caters to the general, systematic eroticisation of violence found at a larger scale in society, which creates a hostile atmosphere where men feel entitled to perpetrate violence against women.

3. 1. 3. Reviews

It is not necessary to open an account in PunterNet to access the Directory or read reviews. The reviews were formerly known as “Field Reports.” The filters to search for reviews include: “Single Review” (to introduce the number of the review), “Date”, “Lady's Name”, “Author's Name”, “Location”, “Contact Details”, “Essay Text” (to look for exact words or sentences), “Recommended” (“Reviewer recommends Lady? Yes, No, Neutral”), and “500 Last Reviews.” The latter takes the user to a list of the last reviews, which increase every day so that 500 may have been reached in two or three months. They are ordered by “Number”, “Lady”, “Location”, “Profile”, “Author”, “Rec?” [Recommended?] and “Published”, as shown in the screenshot below. Through the section “Review Statistics”, sex buyers can find those “ladies with active Service Provider profiles having 20 or more reviews.” These women are listed as “Top Ladies.”

Information on the number of reviews they have, the date of the first and the last review, as well as the average price for the sexual services on offer, can be found in this section.

Search Results

500 reviews found Page 1 of 10 [Next](#) Items Per Page: 50

Click on a review number to read the full review. Click on a column heading to change the sort order of the list.

Number	Lady	Location	Profile	Author	Rec?	Published
124232	Ravena	London	Russian Escorts in London	Legendz	YES	19 Mar 2017
124231	Elizabeth	London	Elizabeth Kfs	SWS	YES	19 Mar 2017
124230	Rosalba	London	Russian Escorts in London	Robert12	YES	19 Mar 2017
124229	Rebecca	Sheffield		stevestud	NO	19 Mar 2017
124227	Selina Rav	Wales		glyn8888	NO	19 Mar 2017
124224	Ella	Milton Keynes	Annabellas MK	Sooty	YES	19 Mar 2017
124223	Bella	London	24/7 Babylon Girls	Assguy	YES	19 Mar 2017
124222	Tate	London	Russian Escorts in London	PGNY	YES	19 Mar 2017
124221	Nina	London		markpussy eater	YES	19 Mar 2017
124220	Lia	Milton Keynes		Transit	YES	19 Mar 2017
124217	Raminta	London	Russian Escorts in London	Gladallover	YES	19 Mar 2017
124216	Naomyyy	London		COLL	YES	19 Mar 2017
124213	Irvette	London	Russian Escorts in London	Steve-9394	YES	15 Mar 2017
124212	Shereen	London	Shereen - Stunning Mediterranean Naughty Mature	theyumyman	YES	15 Mar 2017
124211	Tate	London	Russian Escorts in London	mikeyfin	Neutral	15 Mar 2017
124208	Melissa	Milton Keynes	Ego Massage	fatboy	YES	13 Mar 2017
124207	Oana	London	Top Secret Escorts "Top 10 London Girls"	Chelsea Dude	NO	13 Mar 2017
124205	Yasmina	London	Russian Escorts in London	Big Jim 1111222	YES	13 Mar 2017
124204	Amber Ashton	London	Amber Ashton- English Ebony Mix In Central London	Hunter T	YES	13 Mar 2017
124203	Brunela	London	London Escorts - Angels Of London Escorts Agency	GR234	YES	13 Mar 2017
124202	Sammy	Manchester	GFE Massage Manchester	doug-donq1973	YES	13 Mar 2017
124201	Frutti	London	Peachy Escorts - Simply The Best!	tigerfeet	NO	13 Mar 2017
124200	Nina	London	House of Divine	Confuscius	YES	13 Mar 2017
124198	Angel	Milton Keynes	Annabellas MK	Retum2form	YES	13 Mar 2017
124197	Jayda	Milton Keynes	Ego Massage	fatboy	YES	13 Mar 2017
124196	Shantel	Northampton	Massage @Xomonthampton	charlieton	YES	13 Mar 2017
124195	Adina	London	Russian Escorts in London	Steve-9394	YES	13 Mar 2017

To submit a review, the users have to create a PunterNet reviewer account via the “My Account” page and log into it. The review submission can be done from either the provider's profile page or from the “My Account” page. All the information provided in the reviews is crucial for sex buyers to decide over which woman/girl to choose. It is structured in a way that the men can provide information about, firstly, the “Details of Visit”, which include: “Author”, “Type of Visit” (“Incall” or “Outcall”), “Date and time of Visit”, “Duration of Visit”, “Amount Paid”, “Recommended” (“Yes, No, Neutral”). This is followed by “Details of Service Provider”, including “Profile Name”, “Website and Phone.” Thirdly, the main corpus of the reviews, composed by “The Premises”, “The Lady” and “the Story.”

Review Statistics

Top Ladies

Ladies with active Service Provider profiles having 20 or more reviews

Name	Location	Profile	Reviews	First Review	Latest Review	Average Price
Shanelle	Hertfordshire	Shanelle	105	27 Aug 2003	11 Feb 2017	£265
Chloe	Milton Keynes	Chloe - Independent English Redhead	88	14 Aug 2008	12 Jul 2016	£129
Linzi Dawn	Birmingham	Linzi Dawn	88	10 Sep 2007	6 Mar 2017	£136
Helen	Telford	Helen	72	21 Jul 1999	28 Nov 2016	£115
Victoria	Washington	Victoria Kavanagh	64	2 Feb 2004	30 Jan 2016	£112
Jan	Whitchurch	Jan	61	7 Mar 2001	13 May 2016	£94
Kim	Dartford	Kim	59	10 Aug 2000	24 Dec 2013	£169
Pia	Bedford	Pia	58	28 Jun 2004	17 Oct 2016	£153
Sophie	Milton Keynes	Sophie	53	13 Jul 2005	16 May 2011	£102
Amber	Liverpool	Amber	52	26 Sep 2000	2 Jul 2011	£428
Cat	York	Cat	48	4 Apr 2002	14 Feb 2015	£177
Nadia	Bristol	Nadia	47	3 May 2002	2 Nov 2010	£51
Helen Jones	Manchester	Helen Jones	41	15 Mar 2002	2 Aug 2015	£282
Charlotte	Birmingham	Charlotte	40	1 Aug 2000	18 Nov 2011	£85
Emma	London	Submissive Emma	40	26 Jan 2005	4 Mar 2017	£191
Daisy	South East	Daisy Flowers -Previously Milton Keynes	39	1 Jul 2013	13 Mar 2017	£94
Julie	Chigwell	Julie	38	8 Apr 2006	17 Jan 2013	£110
Sacha	Maidenhead	Sacha English -Busty Blonde MILF	36	24 Jun 2002	31 Jul 2016	£177
Ruth	Kendal	Ruth - Strawberryblonde	35	18 Apr 2007	8 Sep 2013	£207
Kirsty	Maldstone	Kirsty	34	7 Jul 2002	27 Mar 2010	£151
Laura	Norwich	Laura	34	29 May 2007	25 Sep 2013	£156
Angelina	Northampton	Angelina	33	3 Aug 2002	2 Nov 2015	£364
Christine Love	London	Christine Love - British Bisexual Fetish GFE	33	26 Mar 2013	29 Jan 2017	£677
Mel Rose	Peterborough	Mel Rose	33	3 Aug 2001	11 Aug 2016	£134
Laura Lee	Glasgow	Laura Lee	32	11 May 2006	1 Jul 2013	£393

[Home](#) [Directory](#) [Announcements Calendar](#) [Reviews](#) [Community Forum](#) [My Account](#)

Search Reviews

Use the search criteria below to narrow your search. Leaving all the items under a particular heading unselected will leave that section out of the search.

- Single Review
- Date
- Lady's Name
- Author's Name
- Location
- Contact Details
- Essay Text
- Recommended

Reviewer Recommends Lady?

- Yes
 No
 Neutral

Quick Links

[500 Latest Reviews](#)

Reviews

Formerly known as Field Reports.

You do not have to register an account in order to search the Directory or read reviews.

Please use the menu on the left to search for reviews of service providers.

For a list of the newest reviews, simply search by Date -> Most Recent and put in the number of days since your last visit.

The newest review is number 124232, published on 19 Mar 2017

Submitting Reviews

Reviews may be submitted on any active UK-based female service provider, whether or not they have a profile here.

To submit a review, create or log into your PunterNet reviewer account via the "My Account" page. You can then initiate the review page or from the "My Account" page.

[Review Statistics](#)

[Follow @PunterNetUK](#)

3. 1. 4. My Account

In this section, the user can open an account. There are two types: Client/Reviewer and Service Provider. The user must provide an email address, type a password twice, and confirm s/he is a person. A verification code is then sent to the email. The administrators emphasise they allow users to create only one account because creating several accounts will be considered "proof of dishonest intentions and will result in a permanent ban

from this site.” They state that under no circumstances can users create a second account, and that if they lose their login details, they can go through the account recovery process.

Home Directory Announcements Calendar Reviews Community Forum My Account

Account Registration

Please choose your account type, enter your email address, the password you would like to use, and the reCaptcha (human verification) data. You will receive an email with a verify; enter your email address correctly.


There is a limit of one account per person. Creating multiple accounts is considered proof of dishonest intentions and will result in a permanent ban from this site. If you have lost you through the account recovery process, but do not under any circumstances create a second account.

Account Type: I am a Client/Reviewer
 I am a Service Provider

Email Address:

Password:

Re-Enter Password:

Human Verification: 

3. 1. 5. Contact

This section offers the possibility of contacting the administrators. They advise everybody to open an account before trying to contact them, so that they can verify that the person is a user of their site. They make clear that the main site and the Forum are separate systems and require separate registrations, and that certain types of messages will not receive a reply at all. The reasons for that are: “Not following the instructions on this page; Questions that can be answered by reading instructions, FAQs, or other information available on the site; Questions about the disposition of submitted reviews; Requests for information on a service provider - ALL information is in the directory and the reviews; Anything related to a Forum account - it is a separate system. If this is something to do with your Forum account, please send a forum PM [Private Message].” We have not found “the administrators” to be named directly, other than in the community forum with a nickname. He does participate in it as “Galahad.” However, the details of the “status” of PunterNet can be found on <http://whois.domaintools.com/punternet.com>. All the information regarding the registration of the website's domain is provided here, as shown below. We can see the date in which it was created (1999-09-14), the IP Location (Ohio – Kettering) and the name of the founder: Oliver Beavan. Sarah Forsyth, a formerly prostituted English woman, has written about him:

The founder of PunterNet calls himself 'Galahad'. (...) He's a British man who emigrated to the Midwest of the United States but set up an Internet business in California advertising brothels in Britain (...). 'Galahad' likes to pose as someone who helps fight sex trafficking. He instructs his 'punters' to report any sign that a prostitute is being forced to work against her will and lists the phone number for Crimestoppers. And he's convinced that they would. In a statement posted on the website he wrote: 'The people who use this site (and the many others like it) are decent folk and would not hesitate to make that call to Crimestoppers if they suspected something was not right. So, sites like PunterNet are helping to REDUCE trafficking and slavery, which is what the Government claims to want to accomplish' (Forsyth 2013, no page, digital book).

DOMAINTOOLS		PROFILE ▾	CONNECT ▾	MONITOR ▾	ACQUIRE ▾	SUPPORT	Whois Loot
— Whois & Quick Stats							
Registrant Org	Domains By Proxy, LLC was found in ~12,426,235 other domains						↗
Registrar	GODADDY.COM, LLC						
Registrar Status	clientDeleteProhibited, clientRenewProhibited, clientTransferProhibited, clientUpdateProhibited						
Dates	Created on 1999-09-14 - Expires on 2018-09-14 - Updated on 2016-09-14						↗
Name Server(s)	NS1.CALIFORNIA.NET (has 66 domains) NS1.OAKWEB.COM (has 3,386 domains)						↗
IP Address	216.131.106.222 is hosted on a dedicated server						↗
IP Location	🇺🇸 - Ohio - Kettering - Beaven Oliver						
ASN	🇺🇸 AS22781 RBLHST - Strong Technology, LLC., US (registered Nov 21, 2001)						
Domain Status	Registered And Active Website						
Whois History	341 records have been archived since 2001-06-21						↗
IP History	4 changes on 3 unique IP addresses over 13 years						↗
Registrar History	2 registrars						↗
Hosting History	2 changes on 2 unique name servers over 11 years						↗
Whois Server	whois.godaddy.com						
— Website							
Website Title	🌐 PunterNet						↗

3. 1. 6. Advertising Info

The notion of “poor-quality service provider” that was mentioned above is crucial in the website's philosophy. A similar expression is used in the section directed to the “service providers” that want to get advertised on PunterNet. The site lists the “advantages” of advertising with them. For example, “Having a profile here shows that you are *serious* about being a *professional service provider*” (emphasis added). The expression “professional service provider” is the opposite of “poor-quality service provider.” Here, the website addresses women and girls by appealing to her “professionalism”, and her seriousness as a “worker.” The reviews will help to understand the qualities of such seriousness according to the inner rules of this particular social group and context.

The so-called service providers are assured in this section that they “will always be treated in a fair and professional manner.” It is not clear what this stands for, and probably it is deliberately ambiguous. On the one hand, it seems to suggest that the “clients” themselves are going to be “fair” and treat the women “in a professional manner”, but it is inherently problematic to define what these expressions mean in the actual interaction between the prostituted individual and the paying prostitute. Furthermore, as we have seen, “pulling the woman's hair” can be advertised as part of such interaction, and making the woman swallow the men's ejaculation is often listed as a “service.”³⁹ This is openly allowed by PunterNet, which entails an utterly disregarding position towards women's wellbeing. Also, it is inherently problematic to determine the specific (“respectful”) terms of the encounter, because they depend not only on the woman's setting of boundaries but on any particular sex buyer's will of *respecting such boundaries*. We will come back to this later on. Suffice is to say now that the inner contradiction revealed here shows PunterNet is not openly explicit on this issue.

Indeed, the website does not have a section with a set of rules, neither for “service providers” to know how to behave “professionally” and not be a “poor-quality service provider,” nor for johns regarding how to behave (in a fair and professional manner) with the women. We can say that the conditions that make them “professional” are *implicit* and they go hand in hand with the very nature of their occupation. That is, such conditions are part of the tacit, shared and taken-for-granted knowledge of what

³⁹ As we will see, this should be addressed as a public health issue since it puts prostituted women's health at risk of contracting venereal diseases.

professionalism entails within this particular context. The actual meaning will be determined through the critical analysis of the reviews, which are the direct product of the (pre)assumptions that characterise the sex buyers' community. Since the website does not intend to speak for the johns here, it makes sense to infer that the “fair and professional manner” may rather stand for the website, in the sense that they will have a professional, business-like type of relation with the “independent escorts” and the “escort agencies” that advertise themselves on their site.

PunterNet is on Twitter. The website claims that this increases the visibility and the exposure of their “escorts”, which is directly proportional to the opportunities for them to be contacted by new sex buyers. This shows how social networks, such as Twitter, are used nowadays to promote sex industry-related practices. They point out that many “service providers” have advertised with them for years, and get the majority of “clients” thanks to this. It is worth noting they state that their “Service Provider Directory advertising is available to UK-based *female* independent escorts, agencies, parlours, and party organizers” (emphasis added). Although the word “escort”, as well as the word “prostitute”, does not specify in itself the sex of the person they refer to, the collective imaginary thinks of the escort/prostitute type as female because, as we have seen, the vast majority of prostitutes worldwide have been and are women. Even so, the word *female* here reveals, beyond doubt, that for PunterNet the “client” prototype is a heterosexual man. This is more so since no reasons have been found at any section of the website to believe that PunterNet has even considered lesbian women as potential sex buyers of female “escorts”, and further shows that prostitution is widely sustained upon the woman as seller/man as buyer dichotomy.⁴⁰

There are two types of profiles for “service providers” to choose: Gold (30 pounds per month) and Silver (15 pounds per month). The prices and the features of each are in a table. When a potential john searches in the Directory, search results show Gold profiles first. Profiles that match the sex buyer's search parameters are shown in a random order that is different each time. The differences between the profiles are that the Gold profile allows “Separate Rates section” and “Separate FAQ section” [Frequently Asked Questions] on the profile, while the Silver one does not; also, there is

⁴⁰ In August 2016, a few users showed interest in allowing transgender and transvestite people to advertise through PunterNet in a line of discussion that was opened in the community forum. “Galahad” answered he was working on it but nothing changed. Accessed April 6, 2017. <http://www.punternet.com/forum/index.php?topic/41190-advertising-here-now-okay-for-male-and-transgender-sps/>.

a difference in the amount of pictures that are allowed in their gallery (20/10, respectively) and the number of “active Announcement Calendar events” (8/4, respectively). The FAQs section is for the men to ask any specific questions such as “Do you do bareback?” or “Can I haggle?” and for the women to answer publicly. On the Calendar section, she can announce that she is going to a new town or city during a given amount of time.

On the profiles that are classified as “Independent” there are some with pictures of the woman, physical details, sexual practices on offer, and sometimes an introduction and/or a description of how she is or what she likes to do. The site states that “reviews may be submitted on *any* UK-based female service provider, whether or not they have a profile here” (emphasis added). This implies that women cannot choose not to be reviewed, as we have seen, even those who are *not* advertising themselves through PunterNet. As a consequence, many profiles are created automatically after a sex buyer decides to write a review on *any* woman. In those cases, the phone number and details of the location are provided by johns. The website provides the next automated explanation to such a phenomenon: “This limited profile was automatically created as a result of reviews being submitted. If you are this provider, signing up for a full profile will greatly enhance your visibility and give you access to many important marketing features.” Therefore, the total freedom that sex buyers have to review any woman/girl works in PunterNet both as a symbol and a tool of male power relations as well as a marketing strategy for the website to get more women and agencies (to pay) to get advertised on PunterNet.

Advertising on PunterNet

Why advertise on PunterNet?

- PN caters to the more discerning clients. Having a profile here shows that you are serious about being a professional service provider;
- No extra costs to display contact details or to show yourself as "Available Today";
- Twitter integration increases your exposure;
- You will always be treated in a fair and professional manner.

Many service providers have advertised here for years, and continue to get the majority of their site traffic and new clients through PN.

Service Provider Directory advertising is available to UK-based female independent escorts, agencies, parlours, and party organizers.

There are two levels of Service Provider profiles: Gold and Silver. The table below shows the features and cost of each:

	Gold	Silver
Cost per month	£30	£15
Will appear in geographic search results	Yes	Yes
Indicate the services that you offer	Yes	Yes
Reviews linked to your profile	Yes	Yes
Number of Photos in Gallery	20	10
Size of text to describe yourself (number of characters)	2000	2000
Number of active Announcement Calendar events	8	4
Can flag yourself as Available Today ¹	Yes	Yes
People can email you via your profile	Yes	Yes
Scannable QR Code displayed in your profile	Yes	Yes
Separate Rates section on your profile	Yes	-
Separate FAQ section on your profile	Yes	-

¹ Only available on independent escort or individual agency lady profiles

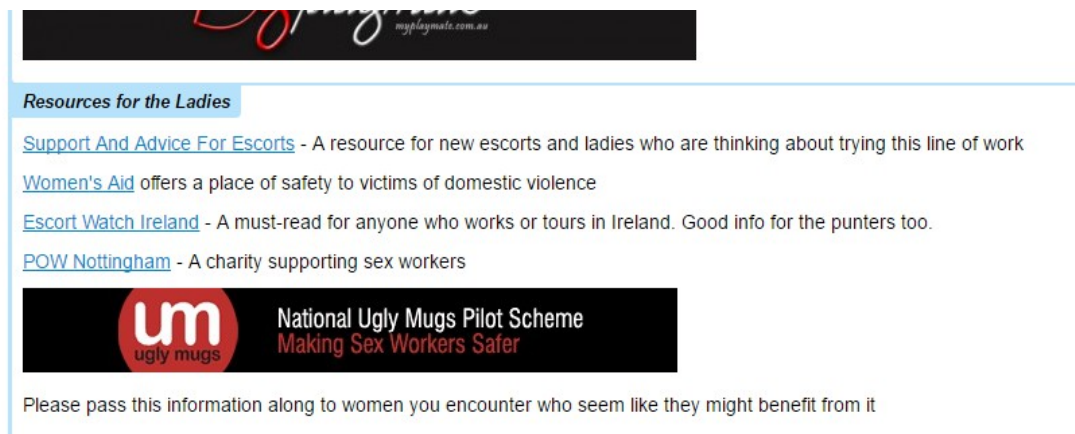
3. 1. 7. Links

In the section called "Links" there are listed a number of websites with information regarding the purchase of sex within the United Kingdom, as well as "hobbyist sites and escort directories outside the UK", concretely, three Australian websites that advertise "escort services." There are more links in "Resources for the Ladies" with information about being an "escort" or "trying this line of work", about help for victims of domestic [sic] violence and a charity that supports "sex workers." In this section, there is a warning against sex trafficking in the following terms: "Important. Have you been offered an underage girl, or do you suspect that a girl you have seen is being forced to work against her will? Report child prostitution and sex slavery – ring Crimestoppers⁴¹ on 0800 555 111. It is significant that such an important issue for the protection of women is relegated to this miscellanea section as if any afterthought that can be used to legitimise the site.

On September 2009, Harriet Harman, English former Minister for Woman and

⁴¹ Crimestoppers is an organisation that can be found online on www.crimestoppers-uk.org. They fight against different types of crimes within the United Kingdom. In their own words, people can "Help locate the UK's most wanted individuals sought in connection for crimes including murder, sexual assault, burglary, violence and more. You can search appeals by post code, crime type or operation and help keep the UK and your community safe with the information you pass on. You can give us information anonymously online or call 0800 555 111."

Equality, said at the Labour Party conference that there was a website “where pimps put women on sale for sex and then men who've had sex with them put their comments online. It is PunterNet and fuels the demand for prostitutes. It is the ultimate commodification of women and puts women at risk. It is truly degrading.”⁴² As we have seen, the domain of PunterNet is based in California and it cannot be closed from the United Kingdom, so she called on Arnold Schwarzenegger, former actor and governor of California, to shut it down. Sarah Forsyth (2013) has explained that American ambassador to London said that PunterNet is protected by the United States Constitution and its guaranteed right of free speech. There has been no formal investigation or legal action taken against it.



Resources for the Ladies

[Support And Advice For Escorts](#) - A resource for new escorts and ladies who are thinking about trying this line of work

[Women's Aid](#) offers a place of safety to victims of domestic violence

[Escort Watch Ireland](#) - A must-read for anyone who works or tours in Ireland. Good info for the punters too.

[POW Nottingham](#) - A charity supporting sex workers

um
ugly mugs

National Ugly Mugs Pilot Scheme
Making Sex Workers Safer

Please pass this information along to women you encounter who seem like they might benefit from it

3. 1. 8. A note on legislation

Neither selling nor buying sex is currently illegal in the United Kingdom, but certain activities that are related to it (soliciting, kerb crawling and running a brothel) are. The current definition of “brothel” seems not to include “escort agencies.” The presence of prostitution-related services on the Internet allows sex buyers to avoid legal consequences of, for example, kerb crawling in their car to seek out prostituted women in the streets. There are certain aspects of PunterNet that would be worth investigating by legal experts. Sex buyers may be violating the principles of law on data protection by providing personal data of prostituted women and girls without their permission (not

⁴² Daily Mail online. 2009. “Harriet Harman tells Arnold Schwarzenegger to shut down US website which tells punters to rate prostitutes.” Accessed March 30, 2017. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1217222/Website-allows-punters-rate-prostitutes-performance-closed-says-Harriet-Harman.html#ixzz4hNCwC5WZ>.

only by giving information of their sexual activities, but phone numbers, details of where they live, etc), especially in those cases where she does not even have an account on PunterNet and an automated profile is created when she is reviewed. Also, apart from stating this on the site, there is no evidence that PunterNet does anything to prevent or detect cases of trafficking. The main problem to this is, as mentioned in the previous section, that the domain is in the United States and, thus, protected by the “free speech position” which, as Catherine MacKinnon has pointed out, is more concerned with supporting social dominance than with equality (2006, 105). These issues fall far from the scope of this project.

3. 2. Analysis of the reviews

The selected reviews have been examined as “instances of sexual politics” in the sense developed by Kate Millett (1977) using CDA to reveal the symbolic power structure of sex buyers' discourse. In this sense, the sexual recounts analysed are much more than plain narratives of sex encounters told by heterosexual men. As in the study of this same website by Sarah Earle and Keith Sharp the original words have been reported *verbatim*, so they include original spelling, grammatical and typographical errors (2008b, 3). The men's nicknames have also been used here. The information they explicitly provide has been drawn out in order to have insight into the type of things they consider important to share with the rest of the community, as well as to know if the conditions they establish in their encounters with prostituted women and girls are settled on equal terms — that is, if the sexual encounter in exchange for money is effectively mutually consensual and based on explicitly respectful principles. The table below shows in percentages the type of information given. The following pages contain the critical discourse analysis of the selected samples. A number of four reviews (two positive, two negative) have been analysed separately to provide individual examples of critical discourse analysis applied to sex buyers' discourse (See Appendix A).

Sex buyer provided information on:	POSITIVE REVIEWS	NEGATIVE REVIEWS	TOTAL REVIEWS
Her body	100% (30/30)	100% (30/30)	100% (60/60)
Her attitude	100% (30/30) (positively addressed)	96,66% (29/30) ⁴³ (negatively addressed)	98,33% (59/60)
Her nationality	43,33% (13/30)	50% (15/30)	48,33% (29/60)
Her age	46,66% (14/30)	50% (15/30)	48,33% (29/60)
Her life conditions	16,66% (5/30)	23,33% (7/30)	20% (12/60)
His own body	0% (0/30)	3,33% (1/30)	1,66% (1/60)
His own attitude	0% (0/30)	0% (0/30)	0% (0/60)
His own age	0% (0/30)	6,66% (2/30)	3,33% (2/60)
His own nationality	0% (0/30)	0% (0/30)	0% (0/60)
His life conditions	13,33% (4/30)	6,66% (2/30)	10% (6/60)
Money was mentioned	36,66% (11/30)	56,66% (17/30)	46,66% (28/60)
Explicit experience on buying sex	70% (21/30)	66,66% (20/30)	68,33% (41/60)
A pimp was present and/or there is suspicion or awareness of trafficking and exploitation	10% (3/30)	26,66% (8/30)	16,6% (10/60)

3. 2. 1. Information given about the women

The total (60/60) of sex buyers commented on the women's bodies and attitudes during the commercial sex encounter. The way of speaking about female bodies varies, but a very common way for them to make the descriptions is to mention all the body parts that are regarded as relevant and colour them with one or several adjectives, using very few verbs. Her face, breasts, buttocks, genitalia, and her legs are the parts mentioned most often, not necessarily in that order. The language employed by sex buyers to describe the women is overtly objectifying. Machin and Mayr have said objectification takes place when participants are “represented through a feature” (2012, 83). In this

⁴³ One sex buyer focused exclusively on his disappointment over her body.

case, a feature of female bodies, by which the women are systematically reduced to their physical appearance. This linguistic mechanism symbolically denies women's individuality. As shown below, expressions such as “a pretty face” substitute *the woman* whose face is pretty, and qualities such as “brunette” become nouns to refer to *the girl* in question. By equating women with food, such as in “Good enough to eat” and “tastes good”, sex buyers depict them as (sexual) objects for male consumption. In some cases, indirect comparisons with other women are permeated with obvious contempt, as in the two last examples. Objectifying language is in itself a form of symbolic violence.

<p>Wonderfully <i>short</i> – <u>I like short</u> – and a very <i>pretty face</i>. <u>I also like</u> a pretty face. <i>Liquid brown eyes</i>. <i>Lovely little boobs</i>. <i>Sturdy, shapely buttocks</i>. Good enough <u>to eat</u>. Which is what <u>I did</u>. Well, in the sense of <u>eating ‘out’</u>, that is. I don’t feel the urge to do that very often. (phillipo) POSITIVE</p>
<p><i>Beautiful. Beautiful</i>. Honestly better than her pictures, <i>pretty face great tits lovely arse great pussy</i> that <u>tastes</u> good. (Bdb) POSITIVE</p>
<p><i>Petite brunette</i>. <i>Tidy figure</i> with <i>nice bottom</i> and <i>small attractive breasts</i>. (kayak) NEGATIVE</p>
<p>[S]he was <i>one of the better</i> TWGs [Thai working girls] of a pretty miserable bunch (Comfortably Numb) NEGATIVE</p>
<p>She <u>is not</u> a <i>raving beauty</i> but <u>I’ve certainly fucked</u> a lot of <i>less attractive</i> women lol. (burningspear2) NEGATIVE</p>

When the men address women's attitudes during the encounters, they also describe (what they perceive to be) their characters and personalities. Contingent details linked to the “quality of the service” are essentialised by sex buyers as if they were connatural to the woman and, as such, part of her personality, as in “you can’t change a girl’s personality over the phone”, shown below. It is common to speak of her body and her “personality” as things that go together, forming part of the same sentence. These two factors are understood to be what they pay for, so it is not rare to find comments that declare her to be “good value for money” (or the opposed: “waste of money and/or time”).

Early 20's drop *dead gorgeous petite dark haired ,fantastic peachy bum,great full breasts,come to bed eyes* and such a *pretty face,very friendly personality* and a *beautiful freshly shaven pussy.Nice all over tan.* (fatboy) POSITIVE

I am not a fan of Eastern European women as a rule , as I find them *humourless* and *without character.* Larisa is the exception to that rule having a *great sense of humour* and *loads of personality.* (gaffer58) POSITIVE

Her **bottom** was quite *saggy* for a 20 something. All in all she looked *presentable* and had a *nice chatty disposition.* Looks wise she was certainly VFM [Value For Money]. Personality-wise she was *very good* VFM. (burningspear2) NEGATIVE

Later I called the agency to complain. They told me I should have called them immediately from her flat and they would have sorted something out. But you can't change a girl's personality over the phone. (Mind Snatcher) NEGATIVE

The flat is shared with two other Wgs [working girls] who would be a shoe-in for Cinderella's *ugly* sisters. *A waste of time* and a long trudge home (indianlover) NEGATIVE

Twenty-nine out of 60 gave some information about her nationality or country of origin, so 31 of them considered utterly irrelevant to mention it. As in some of the following examples, sometimes the sex buyer is not sure about the country she is from. Included here are all the instances where he provides *any* information about her nationality, either real or suspected, because it indicates whether she is a foreigner in the United Kingdom or a native. Also, it is common to find references to having purchased for sex other foreign prostituted women or girls, and there are agencies that offer sex with women of a particular country or region (i.e “Russian Escorts in London”, “Olina Oriental Escorts”, etc). Sometimes, her nationality is no more than a casual comment within the review, which shows most sex buyers do not consider significant that a young girl from Romania finds herself working as a prostitute in English territory. Certain features found in the reviews could create doubt as to whether a woman may have been trafficked or forced into prostitution (such as not mastering the English language or looking stressed out, especially if a pimp is involved) but the men do not address them as such. Twenty-eight of the 29 women whose nationality is mentioned were said to be foreigners, the majority coming primarily from Eastern Europe, especially Romania and Russia, while one was said to be British-born.

Sex buyers	Stated she is or may be from
8 (1 “substitute” ⁴⁴)	Romania
4	Russia
3	Thailand
2	Poland
2	“Eastern Europe”
2	Hungary
2	China
1	Italian-Russian
1	Bulgaria
1	Turkey
1	Italy
1	France
1	England

And *genuinely* French ? not one of those Eastern Europeans who insist they are from Spain etc. What’s that all about, by the way? So long as they can do the business, who cares where they are from? (phillipo) POSITIVE

She claimed to be Russian, but this was not *discernible* and her *constant* “yes baby” was rather *irritating*, as the sentiment held **no affection or inference at all**. (chessgrandmaster) NEGATIVE

Romanian? definitely not Italian despite her assurances. I’ve been to Italy and Romania many times, and know both accents very well, and this girl looked and sounded as Romanian as you can get. (FlyingSpringbok) NEGATIVE

The only *accurate* element of the description is that she does have a vaguely hispanic look to her, though I suspect Romania rather than Rio. (indianlover) NEGATIVE

Twenty-nine out of 60 sex buyers provide the age of the girl/woman, so 31 have said nothing about it. They often use give orientating comments regarding age, such as “early 20s” or “about 22.” Therefore, the table below shows an approximate average of age for the cases whose age was mentioned. Twenty-two out of those 29 women were less than 25 years old.

⁴⁴ A 19 or 20-year old Romanian girl who was not strictly reviewed “substituted” her 18 or 19-year-old sister during the commercial sex encounter. The reviewed girl had left due to “feeling unwell”, as stated by sex buyer “Einrot” (see page 92).

Age range	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-40	41-50
Girls/Women	10	12	3	1	3

As Ine Vanwesenbeeck has noted, researchers seem “to identify more easily with clients than with prostitutes and to have less difficulty with their perspective” (2001, 246). Lynne Pettinger (2011), Sarah Earle and Keith Sharp (2008a; 2008b) are a good example of that. In her analysis of PunterNet, Pettinger aimed at looking into “who the customer is” and how *his* notion of “good service” matters for understanding consumer culture (2011, 5). Significantly, she used the PunterNet reviews to prove her point, as if the sex trade could be unproblematically equated with the sale of any other product or service. She argues that, in a context where “the [female] sex worker’s body is commodified and consumed” (15), heterosexual sex buyers “understand the norms of consumer sovereignty and apply these to their storytelling in order to make sense of their purchase of the commodified body of the sex worker” (11). She concludes that “the sociology of work should consider the customer and listen to their accounts” because “customers matter to customer service work” (27). Thus, Pettinger justifies men’s right to *consume* prostituted women’s bodies as part of their “gendered consumer identity” (13) by implying that *he who pays the piper calls the tune*.

Sarah Earle and Keith Sharp consider “the man who pays for sex” to be socially stigmatised for doing so, because it exposes him “to discredit in a variety of ways and, potentially, in relation to all of his relationships” (2008a, 8). Thus, they have analysed PunterNet as a “safe” place for sex buyers that provides them with “opportunities for remote relationships” (3) between themselves and allows them to indulge in “sexual storytelling” (7). These authors overlook issues of power relations on the Internet in general and on PunterNet in particular, and ignore the money factor within the prostitution contract by equating commercial sex with non-commercial sexual encounters (2008b, 4). They have claimed that there are “clear moral boundaries” which define the PunterNet community, namely, that commercial sex with anyone under the age of 18 is “morally unacceptable” (2008a, 9). They assert that the youngest age referred to in any report is 18 years (it is worth nothing that sex with underage girls is illegal), and that, whilst “sex workers” get described as “lovely girls, down-to-earth girls, and friendly girls”, they were never described as *young girls*, “with all that this

implies in relation to underage sex and the explicit remit of PunterNet which claims to deal only with lawful activities involving consenting adults” (2008a, 9).

Despite these authors' claim, our data shows that sex buyers use many different formulae to refer to young girls, such as “young lady”, “young escort”, “young Romanian”, the blatantly objectifying “young pussy”, etc, as can be seen in the next examples:

She has the grace and elegance of a <i>much older woman</i> and its rare in a <i>young escort</i> . (Braddyboy) POSITIVE
Her cunt was <i>nice</i> and <i>tight</i> as I shoved my <i>desperate cock</i> inside and lay on top of her and banged that <i>young pussy for all it was worth</i> . (volvic) POSITIVE
<i>Nice looking young lady</i> , 5'5 tall, <i>nice slim</i> build, <i>nice perky tits</i> and face . (Moclover) NEGATIVE
All this is a real shame, as the parlour was very comfortable and there are <i>not many girls this young</i> or <i>as petite</i> around. (Willie Wanker) NEGATIVE

The analysis of the PunterNet reviews reveals that sex buyers often highlight positively the youth of the girls, even several times in the same review, making use of both direct and indirect formulae. This shows openly how much they personally like the fact that a prostitute is so young. Conversely, and since in this context they are fundamentally *recommending a girl* to other men, their insistence on the girls' youth proves that the whole community values prostitutes that are very young. The high demand of young girls in prostitution on the part of johns puts runaway and unskilled girls in danger of becoming involved in the sex industry at a very young age if they find themselves in difficult circumstances. For example, Rachel Moran has written that she used to tell sex buyers she was 15 because “it had the almost universal effect of causing them to become very aroused and to climax easily”, which was good news for her because it meant that “the experience was over with quickly” (2013, 61). Many underage girls enter prostitution and remain in it due to lack of opportunities.⁴⁵

The question of whether there is a recommended age to “voluntarily” engage in prostitution is a difficult one within feminist debates. Although this question puts at

⁴⁵ Melissa Farley has noted that “the same qualities in women that are sought by many men who buy sex are known to be risk factors for sex trafficking, for example, young age, low price, foreigner or “exotic,” and inability to speak the local language” (Farley et al. 2011b, 3).

stake the issue of female agency to decide over our own bodies, there is no doubt that young girls are in a very bad position to understand the potential harms of prostitution and make a well-grounded decision over it, in part because of their lack of life experience. Despite the inherent difficulty of this issue, for all individuals go through different personal developmental processes, there is something that can be said about it. When asked at a conference about the age at which women ought to be free to sell sex legally, Margo St. James, the founder of COYOTE, answered: “If we’re going to do the mental thing, we’d choose twenty-five because we feel that a young person should find their own sexual self before they’re subjected to a lot of commercial lusting and leering” (cited in De Marneffe 2006, 44).

Twelve out of 30 sex buyers gave some information about her life conditions. In four cases, a pimp was directly involved. Children were mentioned in two instances (one woman in her thirties, mother-of-two; and a 22-year-old girl that had a 6-year-old child). The lack of English was highlighted in other reviews (i.e. “Romanian, with small English vocabulary. (volvic)”). Here are included those that provide information that gives some extra detail apart from that, namely: the place where she lives, and the amount of time spent in England.

POSITIVE REVIEWS	NEGATIVE REVIEWS
<p><i>Only 18 or so, very petite (...)</i> <u>She started escorting</u> last autumn and <u>has already earned</u> ”top girl” status indicating high recommendation from agency. (Magnus) ⁴⁶</p>	<p>She <u>mentioned</u> she has two social workers, and <u>it seems</u> she <u>moved away</u> from her parents at 18 <u>to become a prostitute</u>. (Willie Wanker) ⁴⁷</p>
<p>Francesca (...) <u>has had</u> a couple of kids and says she <u>plans</u> a tummy tuck for next year. (MrHenryWillis)</p>	<p><u>Said she had</u> a 6 year old kid <i>in Bulgaria!</i> (volvic) ⁴⁸</p>
<p>Liza is from Turkish Decent and only been here a few weeks. <i>Her English was understandable</i>. I was given the option of 2 girls other one from South America. (richard thomas(richie))</p>	<p>This <i>poor girl</i> <u>needs</u> a break, a new profession and possibly an operation. And <u>she's not even 25</u> years old. (ralhar)</p>

⁴⁶ See Appendix A (the case of Cornelia) for the complete analysis of this positive review.

⁴⁷ See Appendix A (the case of Sian) for the complete analysis of this negative review.

⁴⁸ See Appendix A (the case of Sisi).

<p><u>Shares</u> the place with multiple girls. (...) <i>English quality a bit suspect</i> (the girls were communicating in their own language throughout, and only Elsa spoke to me in English). (londonpunt)</p>	<p>On the downside she had a number of <i>tiny bruises</i> on her arms - I couldn't see her legs as <u>she kept her stockings on</u>. They may well not have been but they put me in mind of track-marks. (burningspear2)</p>
<p>Definitely a punt for me so <u>handed over</u> the cash <u>which she handed to the guy</u> the other side of the door. (Transit) ⁴⁹</p>	<p>He is a British pimp and from the accent he is certainly not Scottish. I am more inclined towards the premises pimp explanation and him <u>being part of a</u> more organised infrastructure. (Einrot)</p>
	<p>She <u>had collected</u> the prize money and passed it to her pimp/trainer who <u>was shuffling</u> out side the door. (worldpunter)</p>
	<p><u>[H]anding over</u> the cash, her <u>disappearing to give</u> the cash to her "pimp", <u>returning and taking</u> a towel then <u>having</u> a shower all <u>counted against</u> my 15 minutes. (volvic)</p>

The comments made by sex buyers regarding the level of English of women and girls deserves further attention. While not mastering the language of the country puts individuals in clear disadvantage to find employment, it is not a requirement of prostitution that women *speak*, and it is not generally a problem for sex buyers. Some do complain, though, for the lack of English makes things look “impersonal” to them, while others made explicit they do not mind the lack of English because they are not there *to talk*. Whether a girl/woman has been forced into prostitution or resorted to it out of different reasons, not speaking English increases her social vulnerability and the chances for her to be exploited by pimps, agencies and/or the sex buyers themselves.

Sara is a **talker**, which I like. Too many **working girls** these days have no conversation due to a lack of English. It's so nice to have a conversation with a girl⁵⁰ who has **your**

⁴⁹ See Appendix A (the case of Yumi).

⁵⁰ Sara was said to be 44 years old, so the term *girl* here has both infantilising and sexualising connotations.

cock in **her** mouth. (Clamlapper) POSITIVE

We didn't have long conversations about the meaning of life. Whilst her English is *pretty good*, it isn't *that good*, but I wasn't there for intellectual debate. (Tighthead prop) POSITIVE

Interestingly, there is evidence that foreign prostituted women may as well strategically use the lack of English in their favour. Sex buyers' perception of what happens during commercial sex encounters are sometimes clearly tainted by frustration over the attitude of the woman. However, in some cases, their impression that she may be using her “low level” of English to avoid attending to all their requests seems plausible, especially in cases such as the following ones.

When she came back she stripped off the very revealing dress and proceeded to give an *alright but covered* blow job,no offer of OWO [oral sex without condom], no reverse oral [oral sex performed on the woman], no kissing,in fact the **only** thing she allowed was sucking on her nipples.She then mounted me **but ensured** that **only** about 1" of cock was in her. When I got on top same thing, in fact she kept her hand on her **cunt** the entire time to ensure no full penetration. *Whenever I tried anything different she played the "don't speak English card", absolute bullshit.* (Davho) NEGATIVE

In short, the *singularly worst experience* with a **working girl** in my *twenty years of philandering!* **Despite** the *assurances* on the website that Lora "provides most **services**" this particular "Lora" does not: - **do oral without** - allow any form of kissing **on** her body or lips - allow reverse oral - allow touching of her **pussy** or **ass** - smile - make any effort whatsoever - speak English (*or pretends not to*) - kiss or touch the **client's** nipples or body - massage more than neck and shoulders (if you can even call it massage). (FlyingSpringbok) NEGATIVE

The latter reviews show both an ambivalence on her level of English and an evident intention on the part of the women to defend certain physical boundaries. While keeping boundaries is a basic survival strategy for women in prostitution, the men are often offended when those efforts become evident to them. For example, Autumn Burris, who presents herself as a survivor of indoor and outdoor, legal and illegal sexual exploitation, wrote: “I coped with all the unwanted sexual exchanges by limiting the

amount of time with each sex buyer and instituting non-verbal and/ or verbal boundaries – for example, keeping sex buyers away from my face and not allowing kissing” (Burriss 2016, 136). We will come back to women's survival strategies in prostitution later on.

It must be noted that, through the review system, sex buyers endorse acts of symbolic solidarity among themselves that reinforce the dichotomous division between “us” (men/sex buyers) and “them” (women/prostitutes) upon which the community is solidly constructed. Such acts include the very act of *recommending* either positively or negatively, but also a general attitude of camaraderie typical of male peer groups here applied to the virtual terrain of an online community. Solidarity towards prostitutes, and particularly towards a prostitute who was not able to provide what they call a “good service” is unthinkable. “Pronouns like 'us', 'we' and 'them' are used to align speakers alongside or against particular ideas” (Machin and Mayr 2012, 84). As can be seen in the following examples, the use of such pronouns is backed up by the implication of having the good/bad moral qualities characteristic of the us/them division (i.e. The idea that “lying to them” is justified since they “lie to us”). The third example shows a contradictory attitude toward the idea that she might have been coerced. He disregards it while at the same time considers there might be a pimp/s involved, and implicitly asserts that for him to receive a “bad service” is a form of *exploitation* at the hands of the women and their pimps.

She took one look at me and asked, " u wan stay one hour ? ", I took one look at her and replied,"no thanks, no more money " [well, **we can lie to them sometimes as they lie to us most of the time**] (worldpunter) NEGATIVE

I WILL NOT RECOMMEND YOU GUYS TO PUNT HER. It was a **beauty trap**. Apart from her look, she is a *real checky bitch* and don't worth for a penny for a visit. (...) No French kissing, said sorry to me I was stranger to her and she didn't feel comfy to kiss a stranger. FREAKING HELL, of course, I was so stranger to her and that was the first time I saw her (**GUYS**, I am a clean person, I have no lumps or spots on my face, lips and my cock.). (...) Totally **a scam. Guys, watch out.** (littleman_2008) NEGATIVE

I wonder if it would be stretching a thought too far to question if she had in any way been coerced? As I have no proof other than her *dreadful, dismal service to me* today,

I'll have to assume not. Don't perpetuate this kind of exploitation of **them**, or **us punters**. Don't go and see her. I'd venture that there's a pimp who has paid for the flat and who is taking a tidy profit from the transactions, and I don't wish to be paying them their salary. (kayak) NEGATIVE

Punting Lesson One - DO NOT visit a girl with no face pictures *Punting Lesson Two - Repeat lesson one (indianlover)* NEGATIVE

As in the following example, in some occasions a sex buyer addresses the woman directly. When she is referred to in the third person, the sex buyer is still talking to his PunterNet audience, but he “speaks” to her directly to tell her what and why she needs to “improve” for her not to get a negative review online. His condescending tone makes of this a case of “mansplaining.”⁵¹ In this particular instance, “Louise” does not even have a profile on PunterNet, so she may not get to see it. The intention of influencing the women is obvious nonetheless. This is a clear example of how the review system strongly reinforces their idea of “good/bad service provider” which we will further comment on.

As she has a *nice slim tight body* I ploughed on and finished which was a bit more effort than expected with such a *nice body*. In summary ,Louise you need to concentrate on service and giving guys pleasure.Yes you have the **youth** and the **body**...but you seem so *disinterested* and *disengaged* **those who know good service will look elsewhere**. (DB Cooper) NEGATIVE

3. 2. 2. Information given about themselves

The overwhelming majority of sex buyers deliberately leave out any information about themselves. One out of 60 said something about his physical appearance, only two mentioned their age, none referred to their nationality, and just four provided some detail about their lives. The details provided on their life conditions are limited to a mention of health issues, moving to London, a married sex buyer and one that works in academia. They consciously keep the light on the women whilst they stay in the dark.

⁵¹ A neologism coined in the last decade which refers to a man explaining something to a woman in a condescending manner.

Their personal information is thus safeguarded by a “punter self”, an identity strictly linked to the activity of buying sex and protected by their chosen nicknames. This is further proved by the fact that forty-one percent out of 60 referred implicitly or explicitly to their experience as sex buyers, and twenty-eight out of 60 mentioned the money factor in some way or another. None of them addressed their own behaviour critically nor took responsibility for anything, even when they gave evidence of being overtly disrespectful. As we will see, in practical terms, such attitude means that when something “goes wrong” during the encounter they invariably blame the women since, in their opinion, they are never the problem. That attitude seems pervasive and a taken for granted right within this community; it can be seen especially in the negative reviews.

HIS LIFE CONDITIONS
<u>Due to health issues</u> , I find fucking impossible, even with the little blue pill, so opt for BJs [blowjobs] and pussy licking. (Clamlapper) POSITIVE
<u>I have recently moved</u> to London and have only just started outcall, all my previous encounters to moving here have been incall. (mikeyfin) POSITIVE
No tongue work and all at the same pace - pretty fast too. She did her deepthroat trick a few times. But to be honest I was very disappointed. <u>I've had better Bjs</u> [blowjobs] <u>from my wife</u> . (burningspear2) NEGATIVE
When I mentioned that <u>I work in academia...</u> (Willie Wanker) NEGATIVE

COMMENTS ON OWN AGE/BODY
She <u>recommended</u> Sheila because she was close to my Hotel. I took a taxi to her place. By the way; I am a 25 year old <i>white</i> guy, and I almost have a 6-pack now. <u>I am not ugly or fat or hairy</u> . Im totally <i>normal looking</i> and a <i>nice</i> guy. (EJ82) NEGATIVE
Her hand job was pretty <i>dire</i> , no real <u>understanding</u> of what <u>is required</u> . <u>Kissing</u> was <i>not good</i> either. She <u>seemed to be</u> in a hurry <u>to get it over with</u> (...) In fairness I'm 70 years old and the biological processes are slowing down a bit. If I'd met her when I was 18 no doubt I would appreciate the rush to orgasm in the full knowledge there was another one coming in a few minutes. But she <u>holds herself out to be</u> a professional

and needs to be more *reactive* to **her customers needs**. (oldbutstilllovingit)
NEGATIVE

The sex buyer “EJ82” regards as important to “clarify” that he was young and physically adequate to imply there was no reason for the outcome of the encounter to be bad, but the analysis of the rest of the review proves his behaviour during the encounter was disrespectful and his attitude toward her completely antiemphatic, with comments such as “*She gets pissed and says, 'I am not a sex machine! I am a woman! Respect me!' What the fuck? I just stair [sic] at her blankly, what is she talking about?*” and “*So we do doggy and I like that because she has a nice ass and I don't have to see her stupid face.*” Sex buyer “oldbutstilllovingit” openly stated he was 70; the girl was 18 at the time of that encounter. Although it seems not problematic for him to pay teenagers for sex, 52 years of age difference may have been an issue for her. This is not even considered by him, who portrays himself as a “customer” whose “needs” have not been met. In one case, shown below, the sex buyer explicitly addressed his reasons for buying sex, which prove to be utterly one-sided and aware that the girls he pays for sex would not have sex with him if he did not pay them.

Now, I?m in this for **the thrill of the chase**. You will know if you reading these reviews, and are in **the game** ? the whole thing of finding the establishment, plucking up courage to ring the door bell, then the clickity-clack of the high heels in the corridor as the girl approaches, **the ever-so naughty exchange of cash** and the setting of terms, and then the rude bits. **All with a girl who, by rights, should be way out of my league. I don?t want to marry them - I want to f**k their brains out.** (phillipo)
POSITIVE

Comparing sex buyers' recounts in PunterNet with testimonies of prostituted women shows an evident gap of understanding on the part of the men of what the encounter may entail for the women. For example, 'Mademoiselle', an ex-prostituted woman from Australia, has written:

If I enjoyed having sex with disgusting, dirty strangers why would I

charge them money for it? As if a hot young chick would want to have sex with an overweight, hairy, smelly middle-aged man. Some of the young guys were terrible too because they thought they were Casanovas and would try to fuck you as hard and as long as possible to show how studs they were. All I could think of was, 'hurry up and cum, moron'. (...) I found it incredibly stressful. Whenever I heard the buzzer announcing a new client I would jump. I found it so degrading to have the men decide which girl to pick. I never got used to it and found it humiliating. ('Mademoiselle' 2016, 130-133).

On her part, Tanja Rahm, a therapist, sexologist, lecturer and anti-prostitution campaigner from Denmark, wrote “A letter to my Johns” (Rahm 2016, 79-90), a powerful open letter dedicated to the men who paid her for sex during the time she worked as a prostitute. The letter was first published by German newspaper *Die Welt* and speaks about her negative feelings during the sexual encounters with sex buyers. As we will see, the whole review system in PunterNet is structured in a way that systematically perpetuates such gap by not allowing women to tell their side of the story.

3. 2. 3. The positive reviews

3. 2. 3. 1. Defining a “good service”, or pushing her limits

The positive reviews are characterised by positive appraisal. Through them, sex buyers speak to their virtual audience and give advice to each other about seeing certain women that have given what they call a “good service.” Such a service, according to the analysis of these reviews, is defined by her being accommodating and solicitous, happy and willing to please and allow him to do whatever he wants. The reasons for the women not to set specific limits are very variable. For example, she may be genuinely comfortable with anal sex, she may find a particular sexual practice personally difficult but need the money and do it anyway, she may feel she has lost the right to set up limits because he has paid her, etc. The personal reasons for the women to set (or *not* to set) boundaries to sex buyers are important. Such reasons are not always inferable from the

way these men recount the encounters, though. Sex buyers are not interested in the women's reasons, so they tend not to register them in their reviews. What seems evident to deduce from their discourse is that they stress when girls and women *do not* set limits because they value *that* positively. The obvious consequence is that they take negatively when women *do* set limits.

Good oral skills [oral sex]. **Willing to take all positions I wished.** Seeing her in action **pushing her limits** in cowgirl position was immensely *beautiful*. I also must compliment her for allowing a rather pushy finish in doggy position, which felt quite mind-blowing. There were a lot of "aj aj aj aj aj . . ." calls from her when being pushed a bit hard. She was a **trooper** though and **made an effort to handle it.** (Magnus)

Awesome. Imogen is a *lovely fun young lady* who is up for more than just vanilla sex. (...) Imogen is a *fun easy to talk to young lady*, who is *very accommodating*. **A real credit to the industry.** (Bdb)

unqualified delight. This **lady** [and I mean 'lady' in the best possible sense] is *accommodating, sensitive, sensuous* and **in all I asked for brilliant**. She is *genuinely sympathetic* to **my out of the ordinary requests** and **dealt with me as firmly as I wished**. A *superb* way to spend an hour. (shropshirewrinkly).

I must apologise to Francesca for shooting my spunk up her nose. I hadn't cum for 36 hours and so it was quite a violent spurt, but, **game girl** that she is, **she didn't complain.** (MrHenryWillis)

Very solicitous. She doesn't like anything to do with the bum but apart from that, I'm confident that **she will fulfil all your requests and desires.** (gussetmuncher)

Within the PunterNet community, it is taken for granted that the aim of the encounter is to satisfy men's expectations, both sexual and non-sexual (ego-related). Thus, they expect prostitutes to work on pleasing them *in every sense*. Since they appreciate that she is ready to obey their whims, that she does not complain and that she does not set limits, expressions such as "made an effort to handle it", "never asks you to stop", "she didn't complain", and different versions of them, are common and highlighted as positive. As can be seen in the last sample, sometimes a sex buyer notes the limits set by the woman without acritude and, as overall he considered that she had a "solicitous" attitude, he reviews her positively.

The following examples show the influence of sexual practices taken from porn movies in the sexual preferences of sex buyers, as indicated by the presence of the notions of “facial”, “deep throat” and “face fuck”⁵², which are popular categories in porn websites. Sometimes a highly valued sexual practice is enough to define what a “good service” is. For example, one defined as “superb service” simply for the woman to allow him to ejaculate on her face. Another defined having (unprotected) anal sex as “the best fuck he had”, naming intercourse without condom “some bareback action” and “full service.” As we will see, it is in this sense that what they call “basic services” should be regarded as a public health issue. For example:

Classy and very slutty. Excellent oral [sex], always with CIM [cum in mouth] and lingers in to suck you well and dry, and one one occasion took a nice facial blast. Licks balls on demand; decent deep throath and takes a face fuck reasonably well -- particularly if you tell her you're about to cum. Sex is also excellent and she has good stamina. Never asks you to stop. Ready to go when you are, and can certainly take 2 rounds (and two mouthfuls) in the hour. (Chemical77)

She was very friendly and provided a superb service. I enjoyed this session very much. It was very basic; uncovered oral culminating with a facial. (...) She was coaxing me and asking me to spunk over her face. It really helped and she jerked me faster. I asked to take over when I was closer and she knelt before me and I shot my load all over her face. (COLL)

I was after some bareback action and was told that this agency has a few girls that offer this service so I took a shine to this newly arrived babe from Turkey. (...) [I] asked to go doggy and pumped for a bit in doggy and asked for anal she nodded and I licked it abit to make it wet and slowly inserted in her ass, going bareback in her ass was the best fuck I had an dcame all over her ass hole and pussy. Second round was more oral and third time came inside her pussy. (...) I going to try more of their girls who offer full service. (richard thomas(richie))

⁵² The glossary of the PuntingWiki defines them as follows: “Facial: Ejaculating on a woman's face. Not always offered by escorts especially on shorter bookings as they have to re-do their make up before the next booking”; “Deep Throat: When a man's entire erect penis is inserted deep into a woman's mouth and into the throat”; “Face Fuck: Thrusting the cock in and out of a woman's mouth, often performed while holding the head.” https://www.puntingwiki.com/wiki/Glossary#Face_Fuck

4. 2. 3. 2. Being professional as being serviceable

Words or expressions that would have a different meaning in other contexts become here part of the semantic field of serviceability that defines a “good-quality service.” Two outstanding examples of this are the expressions “open minded” and “professional.” Within this community, open-mindedness has nothing to do with being able to listen and take into account different opinions, being liberal in politics or having no racist prejudices. They use *open-minded* positively signifying women being sexually flexible and accommodating, as we can see in:

<p><i>Cute and submissive, very accomodating and open minded.</i> (Chemical77)</p>
<p>She was a bit <i>nervous</i>, <u>it seemed</u> that I was her first client since arriving in London. <u>I was told by the agency</u> that she is very open minded and <u>with a bit off help will come through</u>. (richard thomas(richie))</p>

There is a general identification between “dressing slutty”, “being sexy” and “looking professional.” Descriptions show the pervasive tendency to highlight certain physical body parts as well as fetishising women by describing their clothes and make-up, and how those three elements interact to define the “professionalism” in prostitution as women being sexy and solicitous. Within this context, then, the interrelation between these three expressions along with some of the serviceability qualities mentioned above re-defines *looking/being professional* as “dressing slutty”, “being sexy” / being “accommodating” and “happy and willing to please.” For example, in the first description, we can see how to “dress slutty” makes the woman look [sexy] “like a street-walking prostitute” in the john's view and how that is positively acknowledged by him. In the second, he gets “a very professional first impression” after a description of her body parts and clothes and defines her as “A really really sexy woman.”

<p>Oh my. There before me was a fit-as-fuck mid-30s milf⁵³, <u>standing</u>, bottom to top, <i>in black, thigh-high PVC boots, red fishnet stockings</i>, with the odd rip, a <i>black microskirt</i> stretching across her <i>lovely spankable arse</i>, and a red PVC basque that</p>

⁵³ The PuntingWiki states: “MILF: Mother I'd Like to Fuck - Mothers, whether attached or unattached, that a man sees as physically attractive enough to want to have sex with them. This has recently become a catch-all term for mature women.”

stopped short of her tits, which were out and begging to be sucked. And a *great* pair of tits they are, considering that she's a mother who hasn't had them enhanced. 'I thought I would dress slutty,' she smiled. No kidding, Fran – you looked like a **street-walking prostitute!** (MrHenryWillis)

Exactly as per pics - minimal, possibly even no photoshopping. Mid 20's. Italian/Russian origin. *Strikingly pretty - high cheekbones and full lipped. Brown eyes. Outrageous natural breasts (34GG). Slim but curvy. Soft and deeply tanned skin.* About 5'6". Fully *shaved*. A few tattoos but nothing too large. Julia was *freshly showered* and dressed in a *classy black* body (with bra underneath to tame the girls), knee high black opaque hold ups and 4" heels - **a very professional first impression. A really really sexy woman.** (gussetmuncher)

Some sex buyers use euphemisms such as “getting to know better”, “date” and “re-visit” for the act of paying a woman for sex. Twenty-eight out of 60 sex buyers mentioned money in some way. Referring to the payment of money euphemistically has been noted in some positive reviews, such as in “business was taken care of”, shown below. It is common for the men to reserve the passive forms for her and the active form for him while performing sexual acts *on* her, regardless of her engaging or not in the sex act. For example, the second instance shows how he “got her to lie”, “[got her] to open her legs” (instead of “she laid” and “she opened her legs”), and how he “tried to finger” her but “[he] was stopped” (instead of “she stopped me”). Often sex buyers (re)present her as being amenable and obligingly passive, which is consciously erotised. Thus, as we can see, there is a correspondence between the type of “services” advertised by both independent escorts and agencies in the Directory and the Announcements Calendar that were described in the previous chapter, and the kind of things sex buyers demand from prostituted women and girls.

After business was taken care of I was offered a drink and a shower and invited to feel at home. (...) She's *very dedicated* to making sure you have a good time so was keen to hear about how I wanted *the date* to go. (...) it was so *refreshing* to meet a girl who really put thought into how to please her client. (...) I felt ready to climax and she moved her mouth over my cock and took my full load in her *beautiful* **mouth**. (Big Jim

1111222)

Then got her to lie on her back on the bed and open her legs to show off her cunt, which had *lovely long, dark chewy lips* to it. Opened them up and tried to finger inside and was stopped after about an inch. OK. Shame. Then I tried to lick her cunt and she muttered something about extra money, so kissed her inside legs and tummy and tits. After a minute or so, I came back to her cunt and kissed around it and risked a little lick, which seemed fine. (...) Not quite the full-on experience I have had with other **girls**, but all in all for £30 a *decent* time. (volvic)

After some kissing, OWO [oral sex without condom] and RO [reverse oral] I got worked up enough to get her to present that peachy arse to me and I entered her doggy style. Cheryl was very vocal and the *moans of pleasure* really turned me on. We moved into a side spooning type position where I could feel her tight pussy wrapping round my cock and I had to pull out before blowing my load early. (sevebalustrades)

In summary, I think getting to know this **lady better** could be rewarding. Sex with her really felt *unusually good* and she has a *gorgeous surprisingly tight pussy*. I may consider a **re-visit**. (Magnus)

For the men, being professional also entails enjoying (or rather *succeeding in pretending to enjoy*) having sex with them. This is one of the major contradictions among johns while pretending to regard prostitution as a job, as they like to believe that for prostituted women to please sex buyers “must be more” than just work. Indeed, when nobody would ask a builder to enjoy the act of putting one brick on top of another to buy a house in order to be a good (and therefore professional) builder, to enjoy sex with johns is a requirement of sex buyers for them to rate women as good (and therefore professional) prostitutes. This is part of the construction of the “ideal prostitute.”

An additional problem with the sex buyers' notion of “being professional” is the type of “skills” inherent to the “job.” Not only it is not easy to identify what these would be (as organisations such as WHISPER and Ruhama have noted), but such “skills” are likely to be based on irreconcilable notions for sex buyers and for prostituted women. Rachel Moran has reduced to three the “skills set” necessary in prostitution, which are very far from what entails “being professional” for sex buyers. These are: “The ability to control your reflex vomit. The ability to restrain your urge to

cry. The ability to imagine your current reality is not happening”⁵⁴ (Moran 2013, 225). Thus, the business-related terminology used by pro- prostitution campaigners reveals to be an imperfect way of masking the abuse many women must endure within the prostitution contract.

3. 2. 3. 3. The “true whore”: the construction of the ideal prostitute

Sometimes, when the sex buyer is satisfied with the outcome of the encounter, the word “whore” or expressions that would define “what a whore is” are used to define her *positively*. Given the generally acknowledged negative connotations of such a term (and with the behaviour associated with it) and the general complacent tone of the reviews that use such word to refer to women, it makes no sense to say that they do not mean it in a derogatory way, *despite its positive intentions among sex buyers* (= **we** get the right to define **them** as whores / it is good *for women* to be “whores”). As noted before, the verbs in active/for men and passive/for women reveal a belief system that holds sex to be strictly a male terrain. Female sexual activity *per se* defines what patriarchal logics calls a “whore.” As part of the dichotomy virgin/whore, the “whore stigma” does affect prostituted and non-prostituted women alike (for the latter, regardless of they being sexually active for the sake of it or being just suspected of being so). Hence these sex buyers emphasising, not only the porn-like sexual practices that took place but the number of johns supposedly the woman has had sex with.

This **lady was born to be whore**. I have seen [her] several times and **I am not the only one**: she tells she been fucked by over 250 men in a year and a half of **escorting**. And she loves it. **I have had her do almost all to me**: rimmed me generously, fucked her senseless while she was screaming in Russian (doggie her favourite), licked my balls, fucked her face and spunked on her face while holding her head firmly, dumped my load in her mouth and even had her swallow my cum a couple of times. My favourite is lying her head on the pillow, fuck her face, pull out and cum on her face, and then thrust my cock deep into her mouth again to suck me clean. But also the sight of her in

⁵⁴ This, she asserts, is because “when a man has agreed upon a sexual act and the fee he is prepared to pay for it, very commonly, in fact more often than not, he will not be satisfied to stay within the boundaries of the agreed sexual exchange” (Moran 2013, 225).

the mirror *kneeling in front of me* with my cock in her mouth while I was depositing sperm down her throat is *memorable*. No anal and surprisingly she does not enjoy oral on her much. But she is **happy to suck cocks until completion** and **obviously enjoys it given that she goes at a rate of 10-15 loads in her mouth a day**. (Custer)

A true whore who I think and assume gets fucked repeatedly every day, but *her enthusiasm* does not seem to be getting a dent. (Chemical77)

When a girl sucks your cock like that, you wonder how many others, including **working girls**, can get it so wrong. Heaven. (...) Finally, she said she would drink my cum, and I wanked into her open and willing mouth. (...) Francesca is **a wonderful whore, filthy and responsive to virtually every form of sexual contact**. (MrHenryWillis)

As in these examples, the passive way “gets fucked [repeatedly every day]” and “she [has] been fucked by over 250 men” shows that these sex buyers do not recognise prostitutes as sexually liberated “sex workers” but as sex objects that “do not fuck” but “get fucked” by men. This means that, even if it were the case that the women they speak about call themselves “sex workers”, for their customers they are just “whores.” This is proof of how sex buyers consciously (re)produce the so-called “whore stigma” denounced by pro-sex work feminists who blame society and moralism for the social stigma prostitutes must endure. Sex buyers are the ones to be held accountable for a stigma that works unidirectionally and that assumes the woman guilty of having sex but not the man *who pays her* for having sex. In a prostitute-prostitutor relationship, this logic is utterly contradictory given the fact that if he had not paid her, she would have had no sex with him (or money would not have been needed for it in the first place). The use of this word shows the way sex buyers instrumentalise this pejorative term, use it to stigmatise female sexual activity⁵⁵, express their desire for women to act like [their definition of a] whore but despise them for complying with the role nonetheless, and so consciously they reinforce the double standard.

Some recounts show the women do perform the required “whore role” by using words of the same semantic field, such as in the previous “I thought I would dress slutty” or in “I’m your fucking whore”, shown below. Both prostituted and non-

⁵⁵ Even in a sex-for-money context where they have chosen to pay for it, so they are likely to hold the same belief system when judging non-prostituted women who have sex for the sake of it.

prostituted women can internalise the patriarchal phantasy of the “whore” based on the *fetishisation of female sexual activity* (which turns against women in the form of social stigma) and learn to fetishise themselves for men's pleasure. As prostitution is essentially based on the fulfilment of male pleasure, prostitutes logically must find useful to perform that role. In this sense, prostitution epitomises the utter alienation and fetishisation of female sexual activity.

I was so in need of a *good* suck and fuck, so the obvious choice was Paris. This girl just gets *sexier* and *sexier*. Dressed provocatively showing off her all over tan, we soon got down to business as smooching turned to groping. Her **ass** and **tits** are a *joy to behold!* She soon had her hand down the front of my boxers ad was wanking my *rock hard* cock. An *awesome* OWO [oral without condom] *followed* in front of the mirror, **she really can take it in all the way**, she was born to have a cock in her sexy mouth. (...) A *shuddering* climax followd as she whispered dirty talk in my ear, **"I'm your fucking whore"** being the words that took me over the line! *Awesome*. (mikef2008)

The “she was born to” formula found sometimes shows how sex buyers essentialise women they pay for sex and define them by such transaction as if prostitution were some kind of fate or vocation a (female) human being is born with/for. Sometimes, despite the review being positive, sex buyers show disappointment when women seem only “agreeable enough” without being too active (not a whore). Proofs of “faking pleasure” are taken negatively by the men. For example, in the example below, it seems obvious that the woman was hoping not to be asked to perform oral sex, and that she was just pretending to like having sex with him, but what the sex buyer points out is that *she did not manage to make him believe she was truly enjoying* and finds no problematic the fact that *despite* he realised that she was not exactly consenting to but merely tolerating having to have sex with him, he forced himself on her nonetheless and blamed her for his dissatisfaction. This a clear example of female sexual desire being disregarded as irrelevant by sex buyers, and of the pervasive belief among johns that sex is only for the man, especially, but not only, if they have paid for it.

General GFE [Girlfriend experience] *treatment* started almost straight away. "That's

very promising," I thought. "Let's see how it goes when she warms up." *Sad to report*, the temperature didn't change after that. From her side, always more of the same. She went along with whatever I did and was *agreeable enough* about everything, *but passive*. *No initiative*, or nothing that I noticed. Didn't offer oral [sex] even at the two or three times when **the opportunity was standing out** more or less in front of her nose, but she did an *acceptable job* of it when I asked. The same goes for the sex. That's except for the **fake noises of interest or involvement while I was inside her**. **Not good**. They started on cue and then stayed at the same level (just like the GFE, in fact) for as long as they were there at all. (unperson)

Often they compliment the girl/woman they are reviewing by implicitly criticising other women they bought sex from in the past. This creates an immediate (and dichotomic) idea of what they like/ dislike when buying sex, even without reading the negative reviews. In that sense, it is a very useful tool for them to compare women within one review which has been categorised as positive. This sets the “bad service providers” aside from the “good ones” in a discrete but effective way. Veiled reproaches and derogatory comments are common in those reviews. Negative comparisons affecting women that are not in the picture, including equating their vaginas (in terms of not being enough small/tight) with inanimate objects, such as a bucket or a tunnel, can be found too. In occasions, critical remarks made indirectly to other prostitutes include potential signs of trafficking, difficult personal conditions, or characteristics of the phenomenon of dissociation that, as we will see, are typically found in the negative reviews. For example:

I put a lot of value on girls being happy to see you and to **at least seem that they are enjoying your company** and she certainly passed that initial test. (...) **Nice pussy not a complete bucket like some escorts!** she rode it well and did reverse cowboy too. Before i couldn't take it any more i popped her off and fucked her from behind with her *amazing arse* there for me to look at when i came. i pulled out of her pussy slipped the jonny [condom] off and covered her [with semen]. **Again she was nice and didn't run off like many escorts.** (mikeyfin)

very stunning beautiful tanned italian girl about 20 yrs old **happy and eager to please**

as before i said a young sophia loren (...) she is just *wonderful* to be with and *very eager to please, great owo* [oral sex without condom] and sex in many positions the time just flew but gabriela **was not in any rush to finish me quickly and this makes her so very special.** (st pancras)

Lacey was attentive and not like she was somewhere else like with some escorts. She really did deliver with a *great* blowjob as she undressed me, she was a *great kisser*, touched all of my body and didnt once stop me touching her all over. She was *very accommodating* and when it did come to it i could fuck her from behind and *on top letting me see* her *pretty* face. (...) All in all a *great* time and for *very little* money. (mikeyfin)

3. 2. 3. 4. Female (lack of) pleasure within the prostitution contract

It is vital to take into consideration the literature on women's experience in prostitution, especially in the kind of research such as ours or the ones carried out by Earle and Sharp (2008a; 2008b), which is concerned with sex buyers and in which the collected data is per definition one-sided. These authors recognise that there is very limited evidence within such literature suggesting that prostituted women enjoy sex with johns and that previous research highlights they “commonly fake orgasms only for their clients’ benefit” (2008b, 15). Despite that, Earle and Sharp take men's recounts that describe female sexual pleasure in PunterNet as objective facts, that is: as counterexamples that show both how much sex buyers care about female pleasure and that prostitutes actually enjoy sex while being paid for it by numberless of random men. As we have seen, signs of faking pleasure are taken negatively by the men. Since the women know that when they deal with them, it is highly problematic to address male recounts of female pleasure as a proof of actual female pleasure taking place within the prostitution contract. Some sex buyers openly make the link between her showing pleasure and a “performance” on her part, while others put a lot of emphasis on that it was “real.” For example:

She does this [oral sex without condom] really *well* and looks you in the eye, **making all the right noises**. Not sure if these noises were sometimes a *little too put on*

however. (Braddyboy)
When <u>i released</u> my load all over her breasts <u>she seemed to love it</u> and if she didnt she hid it well. (mikeyfin)
<u>I don't think</u> that <u>she came</u> but with all the little noises <u>she made</u> and her telling me "that's really nice" more than once, <u>I think</u> that <u>she enjoyed it.</u> (Clamlapper)
Not a lot of detail , just that when she <u>comes</u> if that's an act she deserves an oscar . (gaffer58)
<u>I suspect</u> that her initial moans and gasps were a <i>little artificial</i> , but <u>there was clear evidence</u> that <u>she was enjoying herself</u> as we continued. (...) Elsa <u>was engaged throughout</u> , <u>making me feel as if</u> she was as excited to be with me as I was to be with her (which of course I doubt). (Tighthead prop)
<i>Nice</i> experience and <u>I would recommend</u> to anyone <u>looking for</u> a girl who <u>gets wet naturally</u> and <u>loves it</u> (Braddyboy)
She is also <i>highly responsive</i> and <i>passionate</i> . When she <u>came</u> , she really came! (LeeBrilleaux100)

Previous research done on sex buyers' experience in buying sex across different countries show a great number of them believe prostituted women and girls enjoy the sex (Farley 2011a; Barahona and García 2003). Many ex-prostituted women have largely spoken about their negative feelings about sex buyers, their feelings of degradation and self-hatred due to sex buyers disrespectful behaviour toward them, their shivering panic when they are about to meet a new "client." Their testimonies show there is an abyss between the ways men and women's experience of/in prostitution and that they run parallelly. It is a circular trap: women are required to fake pleasure; when they succeed, the men take their acting for real and derisively call them "true whores"; when they do not succeed, the men get disappointed and/or angry, precisely because they require that women fake pleasure *and* succeed, because that is how they can construct their fantasy of masculine potency. For example, 'Mademoiselle' writes:

It astounded me how many men genuinely thought I enjoyed the 'work'.
 (...) The men ringing asked me the most disgusting questions – like did I have a tight vagina, was I horny (yeah, right), did I like being fucked (you have to be kidding!), what turned me on, and did I have a shaved pussy.

The questions really pissed me off, but I pretended on the phone that I just loved being asked them (2016, 129-130).

There is no evidence indicating sex buyers in PunterNet are either more intuitive or sympathetic about female sexual pleasure than male sex buyers from previous research, especially since buying sex from prostituted women has been found to negatively affect men's behaviour toward all women⁵⁶, and that many sex buyers hold misogynistic beliefs and attitudes that may support rape (Barahona and García 2003; Durchslag and Goswami 2008; Farley et al. 2011a). In fact, our data indicates that certain linguistic strategies employed by sex buyers when reviewing are very similar to those used by the men of the study carried out by Diana Scully and Joseph Marolla (2005) on convicted rapists' recount of their rapes, particularly the deniers recounts. Their study gives insight on how men who are sexually aggressive *construct* reality.⁵⁷ The belief that women “enjoy sex” despite the circumstance can be found in both cases. Scully and Marolla used the concepts of accounts as a tool to organise and analyse the vocabularies of motive which the group of rapists employed to explain themselves and their actions. Their data show it was possible for an 83% of them to view themselves as non-rapists (2005, 274). The authors divided them between admitters and deniers. Admitters tried to excuse it and subtly understated the force they had used and omitted reference to the more compromising aspects of their crimes, whilst the deniers tried to justify the rape and demonstrate that their victims were willing and, in some cases, enthusiastic participants.

Scully and Marolla found that both groups relied on the same themes, stereotypes, and images, to support their own belief that women enjoyed being raped. Sixty-nine percent of deniers justified their behaviour by claiming not only that the victim was willing but also that she enjoyed herself, and some men went as far as suggesting they had fulfilled their victim's dreams. The authors point out that research

⁵⁶ For example, Farley et al., quote a sex buyer saying: “I have an easier time treating them worse. I had a girlfriend who would just moan during sex and she wouldn't talk dirty but then I asked her to and she got better at it. Then I called her a nasty slam pig this one time and she stopped having sex with me. With prostitutes, you can call them anything...” (2011a, 18).

⁵⁷ Scully and Marolla view rape as behaviour that has been learned socially through interaction with others, and assert that convicted rapists have learned the attitudes and actions consistent with sexual aggression against women. The process of learning includes the acquisition of culturally derived “vocabularies of motive”, which can be used to *diminish responsibility* and to negotiate a non-deviant identity by making use of a linguistic device by which norm-breaking conduct is socially interpreted (2005, 273).

carried out with raped women shows clearly that they *do not* enjoy being raped, but that it is highly traumatic for them (2005, 285). The interviewed rapists were convinced women do enjoy it nonetheless.⁵⁸ Scully and Marolla stated that the deniers raped because their value system provided no compelling reason not to do so and that when sex is viewed as a male *entitlement*, rape is not seen as criminal. They concluded that rapists' justifications and excuses are backed up by the cultural view of women as sexual commodities, dehumanised and devoid of autonomy and dignity and that the *sexual objectification* of women must be understood as an important factor contributing to an environment that trivialises and facilitates rape (284). Our data indicates that the cultural view of women pointed by Scully and Marolla as having a major role in trivialising and facilitating rape is legitimated and reinforced by sex buyers' online discourse on prostituted women and girls.

Melissa Farley has asserted that “When women are turned into objects that men masturbate into, profound psychological harm results for the person who is acting as receptacle” (2006, 115). In turn, Ronald Weitzer has mentioned such comment as an example of abolitionist academics writing “in an alarming manner” in order “to arouse readers' indignation” (2010, 17). In fact, women with direct experience of prostitution have made the same link and have expressed Farley's asseveration in similar “alarming” terms. For example, Rachel Moran has written:

[Prostitution] is not some magical arena of life where men decide to treat women as economic equals; women in prostitution are paid in an hour what other women are paid in a week or a day because it is the only way of ensuring they will allow themselves *to be used as human masturbation devices*. Their higher pay does not reflect gender parity; it reflects the difficulty involved in earning it” (2013, 204, emphasis added).

⁵⁸ The authors speak about the case of a gang rape in which the victim had been abducted at knife point. According to two of the rapists, who were interviewed, she didn't resist, and Scully and Marolla quote one saying: “She acted like she enjoyed it, but maybe she was just acting. She wasn't crying, she was engaging in it.” One said she had been “friendly” to the rapist who abducted her. He also said, thinking retrospectively “She was scared and just relaxed and enjoyed it to avoid getting hurt.” The authors note how, despite redefining the act *as rape* then, he still believed she enjoyed it. Even a man who raped five women at gun point and then stabbed them to death, said: “Physically they enjoyed the sex [rape]. Once they got involved, it would be very difficult to resist. I was always gentle and kind until I started to kill them. And the killing was always sudden, so they wouldn't know it was coming” (2005, 283).

On her part, Geneviève Gilbert, the founder of Pink Cross Australia, has said:

Big-shot millionaires who own famous Australian businesses ordered me around like a dog in training. One had pancreatic cancer and could not ejaculate, but I still had to get him off. He needed so much arousal that he always asked for two women. I had to fake orgasms, fake love, be 'the girlfriend experience' those losers were longing for. Losing seven years of my life *being a hole for men's pleasure is violence* (2016, 176, emphasis added).

The objectification of women and its linguistic manifestation are not a twisted invention that feminist academics and prostitution survivors have created. To be sure, they are male strategies of dominance aimed at dehumanising women. As such, similar “alarming” language can be found in sex buyers' reviews in PunterNet, as the following examples further show. Ronald Weitzer does not seem concerned with denouncing women's objectification in the prostitution contract as such, but rather with accusing anti-prostitution campaigners of the very things they fight against. He has said: “One could argue that the term buy women objectifies women who work in prostitution by treating them as commodities rather than as people supplying a sexual service” (2010, 17). This is a conscious twist of the anti-prostitution activists' argument which denounces the objectification at which women are *subject to* within the prostitution contract. In fact, our data shows sex buyers *do* actively objectify prostituted women.

Decided after years of punting to go for **an early Christmas treat** and try my first duo. It had to be an Asian couple (...). I chose Olina's for the straightforward booking by text, as always, and for the added bonus of **their duos being £30 cheaper** than anywhere else! (...) I'd probably **treat myself** to the same duo again in future! (londonpunt)

All in all, a *fantastic* and well needed **shag**. Yes, a bit on the cuddly side and no sexy clothes to turn me on, but *tight pussy*, *great tits* and having laid down the ground rules, **just let me get on with pleasuring my self on her tits and with her cunt**. (volvic)

To be honest, what better way is there to spend thirty minutes than rutting away at a

pretty young prostitute, £70 on the nightstand, no questions asked, no strings attached? Er...well, Mr P, there are the STD's [sexually transmitted diseases]. The throat cancer. And the HIV. The serial betrayal of nearest and dearest. And the squandering of all your money. **The abuse of vulnerable young women.** And of course, running the risk of being nicked by the police. **But apart from that? ?** (phillipo)

The first sex buyer calls women a “Christmas treat” and writes that he chose that agency for the “bonus of their duos being £30 cheaper.” He speaks of two women, not of their “sexual services”, as *the* service. The second one echoes Farley, Moran and Gilbert's “alarming” terms quoted above by writing that she allowed him to *pleasure himself on* her breasts and genitalia. The last john mentions “the abuse of vulnerable young women” as one of the consequences of him buying sex, but the words employed and the general complacent, sarcastic tone of the review indicates where such *abuse* can be found in his scale of values.

3. 2. 4. The negative reviews

3. 2. 4. 1. Defining a “bad service”: the money factor

Through the reviews labelled as negative, sex buyers construct what a “bad professional”, “bad service provider” is. An ever-present reproach made by the men is for girls and women to be there for the money. As suggested previously, sex buyers' comments about the question of money reveal a fundamental inner contradiction in their attitude towards prostitution as “a job.” It is evident that money is the only reason for which an individual would “sell services”, and that girls and women engaged in prostitution would not have sex with sex buyers if it was not because they get paid for it. *That* is exactly why these men have to pay them. And that is why it is problematic for feminist debates that a woman must renounce to her own sexual desire for a man to satisfy his, which is inherent to the prostitution contract (Pateman 1988). Indeed, despite wrapping the prostitution gendered relation with business-related terms aimed at justifying their own act of purchasing sex as nothing more than a “service”, the men do not want women in prostitution to have the *professional behaviour* of money-driven business-women. As we have seen in the positive reviews alone, such expression has a

different meaning for them, other than taking care of one's own business in an effective manner, as it is generally regarded as legitimate in the case of any other working person. Rather than like any other job, they treat prostitution as *their need and right*.

Indeed, the very terminology used to address the prostitution contract is treacherous. As “customers” who pay for a “service”, these men should expect the other party to be mainly keen on money, but what defines a “bad service” is precisely to be keen on money rather than on “having sex with customers.” Although sex buyers *like to believe* that women and girls are there because of the sex like they are themselves, paradoxically, it is not the sex itself what is wanted here (ultimately, prostitutes do not pay a woman to see her enjoy herself sexually) but female compliance through sexual liaisons. Seeing in women a “genuine” *desire to please* them is fundamental. They want the exercise of economic power over women to buy the absolute female subservience on which their masculine ego feeds on. Consequently, they do not like to see that the women care more about the money than about pleasing them and/or that they overtly dislike the idea of having sexual contact with them. It is only important that if prostitutes do not like having sex with them, they *pretend* to like it; that if they do not like the men's company, they pretend so.

Some ladys [sic] do this **job** because they love sex, others for the **money**. *Sadly*, Roxanna falls into the latter category. (Moclover)

No way am I going to recomend this *extremly greedy whore*, or the agency that I booked her with.another punters **nightmare** this one. (...) [S]he looked like a `must fuck girl` on the website and I fancied she'd be gfe [Girlfriend experience]. (...) Greeted by common as fuck gum chewing hungaryan whore. counted her money twice,**thats all that matters**. (onewhodid)

[I]t all seemed to fizzle out and halfway through she was **unenthusiastic and dispassionate**, in spite of my having taken a shower before, and asking if she was feeling and trying to help her enjoy it, by trying to be light, funny, engaging and give her enjoyable reverse oral. She claimed afterwards that she was "just tired", but **I suspect rather that she's not cut out for being a WG** [working girl]. (kayak)

When I tried to crack a few jokes she just sneered rather than laughed. My *attempts at conversation were met* with *one syllable mumbles* and/or *sarcasm*. There was **no**

attempt at friendliness, **no attempt at connection**, **no conversation**, **not the slightest attempt at having a laugh and fun together**. **No attempt** to be *sexy* and *attractive* and *desirable*. Before, when she was slightly *distant*, and hurrying me, and clock watching, and going through the motions⁵⁹, *at least* she did it with *sweetness* and *friendliness*. Now she was doing it with **grumpyness** and **sulkyness** and **complete indifference**. (Comfortably Numb)

The experience was a *disaster* from start to finish. By way of a greeting she informed me that i was five minutes early. **No smiles**, **no friendly chat**. Whatever I said (and I tried to be as friendly as possible), she replied with a *gruff sounding* ‘Uh?’ **You have to say** everything twice or three times, eventually she understands. She had **no conversation** (although her English is ok). She took off her clothes and lay down, and then stared at the ceiling. (Mind Snatcher)

Thus, a “bad service” is defined by been mostly keen on the money, having sex in a “unenthusiastic and dispassionate” manner, not been able to appreciate an “enjoyable” sexual act a john performs on your body, showing “complete indifference” towards the sexual act/the job/the sex buyer himself and by not being able *to pretend* he is smart and funny by laughing at his jokes. If a girl/woman fails to provide them with such “services”, sex buyers decide that they are “not cut out” for being prostitutes. In their analysis of PunterNet, Earle and Sharp have claimed that commercial sex involves “the development of relationships based on notions of love, intimacy, and romance” (2008b, 4). Our data show that the men often disguise their one-sided requirements in terms of reciprocity and mutuality while they actively seek out female subservience, and require and expect that from prostituted women. In the examples quoted above, one sex buyer implies that she was ungrateful *in spite of* him doing nice things for her and “asking if she was feeling and trying to help her enjoy it”, while other john complains about her lack of interest in attempting “connection” and “having a laugh and fun *together*.” One could argue connection cannot be bought, and that the men express themselves as if the women owed them at least to pretend to enjoy his presence, *regardless* of them being tired, depressed or in a personal difficult situation. Their feelings of entitlement to a female subservient attitude are likely to be dangerous for women in general, both in and

⁵⁹ The PuntingWiki defines “going through the motions” as “unsatisfying sex were the escort puts in no effort or enthusiasm and simply does as much is necessary to get the man to cum.” And “Clock Watcher” as “A prostitute that is *annoyingly* [sic] fussy with time.”

outside the prostitution context.

3. 2. 4. 2. Boundaries and dissociation

In their analysis of PunterNet, Sarah Earle and Keith Sharp have claimed that “men's perceptions of female sex workers are complex and contradictory”, but that there is the “underlying assumption that they are professionals worthy of respect” (2008a, 13). Although they admit offensive comments can be found, they blame the women for providing “a bad-quality service”: “these [offensive remarks] are usually justified by some failure of the sex worker concerned to provide a satisfactory, or professional, level of service” (2008b, 13). In their opinion, the high quantity of positive reviews means that “the majority of sex workers are essentially good, decent women who work hard to provide a high level of service” (13). Thus, these authors accept sex buyers' construction of the dichotomic figures of the “good/bad service provider” as an objective fact, taking for granted men's assumptions of what a “good/bad service” entails, justifying their aggressive language as an understandable consequence of women's reproachable attitude. However, the men are the only ones to be held accountable for the aggressive tone characteristic of the negative reviews, regardless of women's behaviour.

It is worth noting that the things that sex buyers complain about in the negative (and in some positive) reviews have been highlighted in prostitution research for being survival mechanisms of girls and women involved in the sex trade. Women with direct experience of prostitution have spoken about one of their major survival strategies consisting on their need of dissociating (split their self between the “personal self” and the “prostituted self”) making use of different tactics including the setting up of physical and emotional boundaries. Maddy Coy defines dissociation from the body as “leaving it emotionally when it is impossible to leave physically” (2009, 68), and points out that this psychological defence strategy is a well-documented reaction to trauma, particularly sexual abuse with the violations affecting both body and self. The necessity of dissociation, the separation of self from body and the need to distance the thinking, feeling self from the physical body, was discussed by the women she talked to as a coping mechanism during commercial sex exchanges. Many of them linked surviving sexual abuse in childhood with switching off from the body and later repeating these

actions when involved in prostitution. Dissociation enabled women “to remain calm throughout each commercial sex encounter” until it became an automatic response (Coy 2010, 69).

Autumn Burris, the founder of Survivors for Solutions, explains how she would not accept overnight appointments because she could not disassociate long enough to get through the night. “Disassociation”, she asserts, “became more normalised over time and with practice – a trick of the trade. I learnt to numb myself by using alcohol and drugs, an important tool in surviving” (Burris 2016, 136). Along the same line, Rachel Moran has called this “the unplugging technique” (Moran 2013, 137). She has written:

One of the ways I protected myself in prostitution was to divide myself, to literally split myself into two characters; the authentic me, and the imaginary version. Of course, the former was reserved for the people who did not pay me for sex and the latter created in order to distance myself from those who did. If a client asked me what my favourite fruit was (and I've been asked stranger questions than that) I would answer with any fruit I could think of, but I would never admit to my true preference for mangoes. If I was asked my favourite colour, I would attest to adore the first colour that came into my head, any colour, except green (2013, 143).

As Susan S.M. Edwards has put it, unlike the worker who tries to fight against alienation and separation from the product of her/his labour, alienation and separation for prostituted women is essential for survival, so they develop this “split personality.” In that sense, “prostitution is the epitomisation of alienation” (Edwards 1996, 99). As mentioned above, the analysis of the PunterNet reviews indicates that signs of dissociation and the setting of boundaries on the part of girls and women are met with utter frustration and anger by prostitutes. Thus, the use of capital letters, exclamation marks, and pejorative terms are common in the negative reviews, as can be seen in the following examples:

If this **bitch** could get away with charging for virtual sex with you not even being in

the room she would. (Davho)

The sight of her *sour face* looking silently at the ceiling during the final missionary position was enough to dampen anyone's enthusiasm, so I promptly called it quits, dressed and left. (FlyingSpringbok)

Service was rushed, to say the least. Oral [sex] was *uninspiring* and attempted at a *rapid, ridiculous* rate. Even before things really got going, a *speedy, frantic* **hand-job was performed**, delivered in the most *insincere, mechanical* way, one can imagine. I cannot even claim the sex to be *invigorating*, as a **mass amount of lube** and a *flaxen, disinterested* posture by the **girl displayed sheer ambivalence towards me and the act itself**. (chessgrandmaster)

*****THE WORST RIP-OFF EXPERIENCE OF MY PUNTING "CAREER"***** Went to see another girl in the building, who was busy, busy, busy even though she had agreed a time with me! (...)

*****AVOID THIS ONE LIKE A DOSE OF CLAP*****

Sat on the edge of the bed to get the todger hard and she kept her clothes on whilst dancing around in front of me. Put condom away after about 2 minutes and said "cum on you finish now" WTF "NO, I paid to have sex with you" Still fully clothed! Then before I knew what was happening, she pushed me back on the bed, grabbed my cock and despite me saying "NO, I WANT SEX" about 5 times, she had spunked me all over the place with her hands in about 30 seconds. I tried to push her away and stop her making me cum by hand but, she just kept going. THEN, had the gaul to chat to me about what I was doing for the rest of the day as I got dressed. ***THE WORST RIP-OFF MONEY GRABBING WHORE OF A ROMANIAN WG [working girl] I HAVE EVER ENCOUNTERED*** (...)

SHE DID NOT EVEN TAKE ANY OF HER CLOTHES OFF OR LET ME TOUCH HER TITS OR CUNT.
 avoid**avoid**avoid**avoid (volvic)

The way the negative reviews are narrated have a few features in common that form a pattern. The lexical choices aim at portraying themselves as the affronted party, while at the same time they omit details that may be the actual reason for any given reaction on her part. Thus, the “bad outcome” of the encounter is always blamed on the woman. As the admiter rapists of the study carried out by Scully and Marolla (2005), sex buyers often *omit* references to the things that may compromise them. For example, in the

following instance, the reader gets to know only that she starts insulting him during intercourse. By writing “Next thing” and “Wtf is that about?” he deliberately leaves out information that may have helped to see the whole picture and what was actually happening:

Put on the condom and started to shag and [her] attitude completely changes into bitch mode. Starts complaining about the position her body is in. **Next thing** she is swearing at me in a non dirty talk way. **Wtf is that about?** After that she just laid there like a dead body. Her lack of effort was so bad the old fella lost interest and I didn't even come. (Gunner1)

In this case, the most obvious deduction is that he was hurting her, she tried to let him know, and because he did not stop, she insulted him and “switched off.” He does not address his own behaviour critically and, instead, portrays her as crazy and unreasonable and complains about “her lack of effort.” In the example below, the selection of verbs and adverbs aim at positioning the reader with the author of the review, and intends to depict the girl as ill-tempered and disrespectful (*he asked politely* (but she did not obey), she *barked*, she *grimaced*). What he regards as a lack of respect (to turn up the volume of the music), may have been for her a coping mechanism. The second sex buyer clearly implies that she was capricious, careless and that she lied to him, and does not consider legitimate that she gives signs of not enjoying his company and that for whichever reasons she may have just changed her mind over accepting certain practices, something any human being should have the right to do.

I asked her *politely* not to take any more calls while I was paying for her time. Her response was to turn up the volume of the music on her mobile in order to mask the message alerts. The music was *ghastly*, some kind of Eastern European rap. I asked her to turn the volume down a bit or play something more romantic. ‘I haven’t got’ she said. Embracing her was useless, she was **as frigid as a marble statue and about as welcoming**. ‘What you want me to do?’ she barked. ‘Just act normal’ was my reply. ‘I am normal’ she grimaced. (Mind Snatcher)

Disappointing! Usual game played. . .clean girl, but constantly reminding me of the

time, would NOT let me lick her pussy even though I had explicitly texted her beforehand and received a POSITIVE reply. *Reasonably cheerful*, but complained when I asked her for a wank after a *pretty uninspiring shag* for 2-3 minutes, although did oblige eventually. (volvic)

Our data indicates that the relationships established between prostituted women and sex buyers are pervasively based on non-egalitarian conditions, as many of these men hold an exploitative and violent attitude based on their patriarchal sex-right and feelings of entitlement to female subservience. In both the positive and the negative reviews can be seen that the women are systematically objectified and often treated with contempt. Also, women get compared and even equated with certain objects, like a blow-up doll, or something lifeless, like a dead body. As the positive reviews showed too, it is common to comment on the “quality” of their vaginas and reduce their value to that. The dehumanising linguistic strategies on the part of sex buyers are evident. This attitude toward women finds support and legitimation within the rest of the community. The following examples further epitomise such attitude.

By then I knew this was going to be a **bad punt**, so I just got on with doggy and mish to finish. **Only plus side - reasonably tight pussy** - but then, so's the one on my blow up doll - which is possibly more *affectionate* than this **lady** (...) CONS: >Zero GFE [Girlfriend experience], despite this **being advertised**. >Zero warmth - **no** smile, **no** conversation, **no** hugs, **no** greeting, **no** goodbye kiss. >**No** kissing - PERIOD - forget FK [French kiss] - **not** even a peck on the cheeks or lips - she would push me away each time. >*Ridiculously fussy* - doesn't like to stand, hug, or any kind of contact *apparently*. >Very rough with **your** cock - **zero** tenderness.

PRO: >**reasonably tight pussy**

Conclusion: Not HoD [House of Divine] quality - I don't see her lasting long in HoD. (Sirspunkalot)

I always like to look at the womans face when giving her oral, but in this case I had to stop as her face just looked so '**out of it**' and was **off putting**. (...) I checked the time and it had been 20 mins in to a 30 min punt and I'd had enough. She seemed surprised but considering she hardly spoke, made **no** noises (**even fake ones**) and had all **the**

enthusiasm of a corpse, she shouldn't have been. (Punterderby)

It was just a transaction [sic], she treated me like a piece of meat and I treated her like a piece of meat. Only in this case it was **Horse meat**. (worldpunter)

She was groaning in discomfort and I asked for doggy... she refused because i'm too big (lots of girls say this, but I was surprised because **she's like the channel tunnel down there**, she wasn't just being lazy either). (ralhar)

The first sex buyer carefully omits to say what he may nonetheless suspect: she does not like any kind of contact... with him. This way of expressing themselves is part of the tendency, discussed previously, linked to fusing women's behaviour during the encounter and their “personalities”, essentialising them and defining them through those traits sex buyers consider convenient, whether positive or negative. Also, when they find no compliance on her part, it is common among prostitutes to feel cheated or as if the woman was stealing money from them. When sex is regarded as a mere service, it is logical that the best “bargain” is highly valued. Seventeen out of 30 sex buyers mentioned money in the negative reviews. A number of them expressed feelings of being exploited and cheated, and the interest of the women on money rather than on *the men* is sometimes clearly evidenced. As we have seen, the interest on money is one major factor of a bad service, so euphemistic expressions are found less often in the negative reviews than in the positive ones.

However, after I paid her, **my nightmare began** and she turned a real face to me. (littleman_2008)

I should have walked but I accepted the whole overcharge hoping she would at least be enthusiastic and offer an *honest* and *unrushed* **service**. *Unfortunately* I had to put up with her **cold** demeanour and **timewasting tactics** instead. The events at the end of the 2hr session with her *aggressive* **behaviour**, her **audacity** to assume the role of the victim whilst **she was the offender** and the suicidal stunt of **her pimp** who dared to threaten me were the cherry on an already *disgusting* cake. (Einrot)

Of all my visits to HoD [House of Divine] - this is the first time that I have actually felt like **I was screwing a prostitute**. I.e. usually I come away feeling like I have just met a rather **peculiar (and sexy) friend**. Came into the room - **no hug, no kiss, not even** a smile.

Goes straight to the bed, '**money first**' she says - then orders me to lie down. (Sirspunkalot)

She left me feeling *dirty* and the feeling I had been with a **prostitute who was ripping me off**. Her programme seemed *well rehearsed*, so I suppose I got what everyone got, in the same order. Not a VFM [Value for money] feeling about this one (kencarter)

Really this sort of **behaviour** is almost like stealing, after all I have paid for her time and **she should give me her undivided attention**. (oldbutstilllovingit)

3. 2. 4. 3. “Basic services” as a form of violence and a public health issue

Within the PunterNet community, there is the widespread notion that certain sexual practices can be taken for granted. They are called “basic services.” Such notion is hugely problematic for several reasons. First, it reveals that ideally, everything should be “on sale” but that if that is not the case, there will still be “basic services” that all women must guarantee. This is itself an assumption that comes from the feeling of male entitlement to female bodies and compliance, and it is likely to have traumatic consequences for prostituted women and girls. Indeed, this is linked to the survival strategies discussed above. As Susan S.M. Edwards has written: “The selling of sex is carefully circumscribed, certain behaviours and certain actions are taboo, certain bodily zones are out of bounds, and certain symbolic acts are reserved for loved ones” (Edwards 1996, 98). According to her, this speaks more about what intimacy is, rather than about what sex is, and she points out that many prostituted women care more about the mouth, the lips, kissing, than about the genitals and breasts.

Rachel Moran points out the fact that a prostitute accepts money *before* each experience, so she has no way to know what is it exactly that she is accepting money for. More often than not, she explains, a prostitute finds herself dealing with a situation far removed from anything she had agreed upon: “Besides any of this, I felt the same sickening nausea and rising panic that is inherent to conventional sexual abuse in each prostitution experience I ever had, and I felt it *regardless* of whether or not a man stayed within the agreed sexual boundaries” (2013, 112). The notion of “basic services” developed by prostitutes and supported in sex-trade advertising (but of course, one should never believe advertising literally, and people certainly generally do not) goes directly against some of the most crucial survival strategies of women and girls in

prostitution, and it can be an overt violation of the “agreed sexual boundaries.” Calling certain practices that women reject to perform basic services trivialises the right of prostituted women to set up their own individual physical and emotional boundaries with whoever they do *not* want to intimate. Even *if* these sex buyers did not violate her boundaries during the encounter, by exposing publicly on PunterNet that certain women and girls “do not provide certain services” they deny their right to set up their own boundaries. The men also try to influence and put pressure on other women not to set limits, while reinforcing sex buyer's notion that “sexual services” are a (male) right.

An *appalling con*. Her **list of services** on the website in no way reflect what she does or rather doesn't do. (Davho)

I opted for the **standard £60 for basic service**. I then asked about kissing, which *apparently*, was an **additional £20**. Then, how about kissing on the body, which proved to be another £20. I chose this one, as I wanted some interaction, but this turned out to be *simply* me being able to kiss her body. **No** interaction from her on me, not at all. So, this **pricing scheme is seriously flawed** and does not reflect what you are getting. If you count up the various services that you could get, you might as well find an Independent. (chessgrandmaster)

Eva entered the room wearing bra and panties and we had a standing cuddle. She does not permit closed mouth kissing unless extra is paid. I removed her bra and pants and she lay me face down on the bed face down and gave me a massage. She allowed me to suck her nipples and play with her pussy but would not allow me to give her oral without an **extra payment**. She put a condom on my cock and gave me a good blow job before I entered her and fucked her. **I have never paid extra for kissing or giving oral** previously at this parlour and was *very disappointed* to be asked to. I refused and will not see Eva again. (Bogtrotter)

It is utterly contradictory to pretend to regard sexual practices as services and intend that, for example, kissing and giving oral sex should be for free, as the last buyer wanted it to be. Secondly, unprotected sex is generally valued by the johns and the risk of venereal diseases is often not taken into consideration. To show interest precisely for the type of sexual practices that can put a woman in a very vulnerable position, to be willing to pay more for that, proves their lack of concern and respect for the women and

it is in itself a form of violence. It is also a public health issue that puts prostituted women and girls at high risk. In *Buying the right to rape*, Evelina Giobbe tells the story of a woman who briefly worked in a window in Amsterdam: the condom broke and she expressed anxiety to the sex buyer about contracting AIDS, but he simply laughed at her. “The worst part of it,” she writes, “was that the guy was so fucking unconcerned — he just laughed and said I was a good fuck” (Cited in De Marneffe 2006, 20). While coitus without a condom has been admitted to take place in fewer instances, such as in the previously mentioned sex buyer who “was after some bareback action”, unprotected oral sex has been mentioned frequently. In particular, oral sex on the man is a sexual practice that does put women, but not sex buyers, in danger of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. In the following examples, oral sex without condom is understood to be a “basic service” and the use of the condom is sometimes even treated as “not erotic.”

No **OWO** [Oral without condom]- how did I miss that? I'm usually so careful. (oldbutstilllovingit)

Points + *Good covered deepthroating*. Really *deep* and no gagging reflex.
 + Fingering was permitted. Perhaps though as part of the **paid reverse oral £40 extra**. (...) x *Inaccurate* enjoys list and *ridiculous extras for basic services*. Profile makes absolutely no reference to extras. **Extras:** FK [French kiss] & RO [Reverse oral]: £40 (expected from pre-meeting comms). COB [Cum on body]: £30 (unexpected). Talking about taking the piss for someone charging £160 for an hour.
 x **No ball licking. I bet it is extra.** I didn't bother to ask. God knows how much.
 x **No OWO, no CIM** [Cum in mouth]. **Facials** are perhaps extra £50. But I wasn't expecting any of these services anyway. (Einrot)

Then she said "blowjob" and stood up to get a condom. I asked her to continue with the massage down my butt and legs and she *bluntly replied* "no, blowjob only". She then **refused to do oral without** and slapped a condom on my *limp* dick which ordinarily would have been as *hard* as a rock by then, but this whole experience was already akin to pouring ice cold water on me old fella. (FlyingSpringbok)

I did not have a good time. I called Aurum Escorts and asked for a girl that was a **really good GFE** [Girlfriend experience], including kissing, woo [sic] ["owo": oral

sex without condom] and cim [cum in mouth]. (...) I paid 250 pounds up front. Took a quick shower then laid on the bed naked. She got naked and began rubbing her fake tits on me. She got a condom out and started blowing me. I said, "I don't want a condom for BJ" [blowjob] She said, "We must use condom, you might have chlamydia." Ok, nice way to make me loose my erection, tell me I have chlamydia... I said, "I asked for a girl who did owo and was gfe, the woman on the phone told me that was you, the website also says you do that." she said, "No, every girl puts that on her website and the woman on the phone always says we do that, but I do not do that unless you give me a tip." (EJ82)

Lastly, the concept of “basic services” poses an additional problem to the idea of prostitution as just “work.” Since prostitution involves sex, can the government legitimately regulate the sexual lives of individuals, of which individuals, under what principles, and to what extent? But if it is about work, workers' health must be protected by the government, although how can women's health be protected from *their customers' requirements* under a policy of legalisation or decriminalisation which obviously disregards the questionable hidden aspects of buying sex by treating it as a legitimate practice? If it has to be a legal profession, what kind of practices should be regarded as part of the job? Could the government, prostituted women and sex buyers agree on them? Is it legitimate that a woman's health must be put at risk of contracting venereal diseases to “provide a service” men require?

Proponents of the legalisation and decriminalisation model have promoted the idealistic notion that women are free to choose their “clients” and set up limits; they should be concerned with sex buyers' expectations. It is difficult for women to try to keep in control of the situation, as the men actively try to control the situation themselves. Our data indicates that when sex buyers face boundaries, they can write a negative review online and declare they will look for a different “service provider” next time: one who is more “accommodating” or who does not have the option to say *no*. The main aim is that the women comply with male conditions. Since the so-called customers want to be able to choose from a menu where everything is available, it is especially difficult for prostituted women to defend specific limits: to be able “to keep the job” may entail allowing sex buyers to violate personal boundaries, when not having

to deal with him imposing his conditions by force.⁶⁰ In this respect, WHISPER provided a satirical job application for prostitution, whose “job description” demystifies prostitution as just work (See Appendix B).

3. 2. 4. 4. Violence against women and suspicion of exploitation

Earle and Sharp (2008a; 2008b) have claimed that violence against women is morally proscribed in the PunterNet community. Our data shows no evidence of that. The PunterNet community is a strictly male peer group whose members support and reinforce hostile attitudes against women through their discourse. Sex buyers are aware of being sharing information about an activity that is socially constructed as being specifically a male experience and that it works as a *masculine privilege*. They (re)produce a legitimating discourse on buying sex, which they depict both as a “need” and a “right” to perpetuate that privilege. This virtual community may have an effect comparatively similar to those characteristic of other types of homosocial male groups, which have been said to be a potential broth for the kind of masculine attitudes that are likely to perpetrate and endorse violence against women (Connell 1995).

Leana Allen Bouffard (2014) points out previous research has shown men with higher levels of entitlement feel as if they *deserve* sex and, “if that right/freedom is denied, entitled individuals react by interpreting this as a personal insult and with anger and anxiety” (2). Her study found a significant association between higher levels of entitlement and more traditional, stereotypical sex role attitudes, which significantly and positively correlated with hostility toward women. The data of the PunterNet reviews proves sex buyers often produce an entitlement-type of discourse. According to Bouffard, an important component which has been largely unexplored is the concept of male sexual proprietariness. When male ownership and sexual access is threatened, coercion and physical violence become effective tactics in maintaining or regaining control, which may lead to violence against women. Her findings suggested that the notion of entitlement, especially gendered/patriarchal entitlement, should be

⁶⁰ For instance, Maddy Coy quotes one of her participants when she described being attacked by a sex buyer whilst working indoors. She returned to selling sex after several months hospitalised: “Never, you’re never in control. Alright, say a man comes in and he’s lovely, you know, you’re giving him a great massage, condom’s on, everything’s fantastic (...), he could have put a knife under that pillow, he could put that knife off, shove it to your throat, rip the condom off and tell you he’s got AIDS. What are you gonna do? How are you in control? (...) You know, I mean, I learnt that with my attack (Dec, 26)” (Coy 2009, 68).

incorporated in explanations of violence against women and that the link between certain male peer groups and violence against women should be further explored (Bouffard 2014, 6).

As we have seen, not only there are sex buyers in PunterNet who do write openly about their own violent acts with no fear of being morally judged, but their language itself is often overtly violent. The men can use this online tool to publicly punish women who do not comply with their requirements and expectations. Actual violence against women is openly displayed in many instances, where they push her limits even though she had stated clear boundaries, admit to be totally careless during intercourse or show lack of empathy and respect over her suffering. Sometimes, sex buyers even quote the women's words, but signs that the women may be in pain and/or that the men are hurting them are met with sarcasm and contempt.

x After 15mins of penetration she rushed me to cum.

x She aborted the session after 45mins. She left the room telling me that she was going to talk to her 'driver' [pimp] about something. From the little I could overhear it appeared that she was crying! **WTF?** I believe that what happened is that her cervix got bruised and she couldn't take any more penetration. You might now think I have a huge cock. Perhaps I am a bit above average depending on which survey you are looking at but definitely I am not big. Also she didn't tell me to slow down or anything. If she can't take some hard penetration for 15mins **then she is not cut out to do this job.** (Einrot)

When I ask for a titty fuck - she looks at me with a 'what is that' expression on her face. I try to touch and kiss her tits - she backs off and makes some lame excuse - "**no, they're painful don't touch too hard**". I had barely brushed my hands *against* them! (Sirspunkalot)

I fucked her as hard as I could in doggy, got a few yelps out of her. but she was well used to it. even though shes only a few days in london. Tried to tell me she was **some sort of student, mother of fuck** probaly ok for a *whorish* experiance. but ther is no way I will recomend. (onewhodid)

I found her mixed up (...) I couldn't be bothered to break the **bitch** shield - I just wanted stress relief. I had no relief. (tigerfeet)

For instance, in the first example, the sex buyer himself speaks of an 18-year-old prostituted girl whose cervix seem to be bruised and whose pimp is nearby. Her pain works as an excuse for him to speak about his own penis, without even considering that she has to deal with many other sex buyers who may also be aggressive during sex. He does say “hard penetration”, so it is clear that he was not being gentle and he knows it, but he understands that is part of what a prostituted teenager must endure (even if she is pimped, as in this case). By saying she is not “cut out to do this job”, he implies that being a prostitute requires being able to stand the pain quietly. He justifies himself by saying that she did not tell him to slow down, when in fact, just a few lines above, he had complained that she was *rushing him to finish* which is another way of showing discomfort. As the denying rapists in the study by Scully and Marolla, the sex buyers attempt both to justify their behaviour by presenting the girl in a light that made her appear blameable (in these cases, capricious and exaggerated) regardless of their own actions.

Earle and Sharp present the sex buyers in PunterNet as “intolerant to coerced, or involuntary, sex work, including sexual slavery, trafficking and the abuse of children” and concerned only with “indoor, voluntary adult sex work” (2008a, 2). That is, indeed, the official position of PunterNet, as stated on the website. Despite that claim, from the sex buyers' discourse, it is inferable that they rarely actively take any responsibility for preventing trafficking or exploitation while purchasing women in prostitution, as if that project was beyond them, not their problem. The only thing that is consensually valued is getting a “good service.” Neither signs that may raise the suspicion that a woman is being forced nor the very presence of the pimp have posed any serious moral issue in the sampled reviews.

I called her number from outside in the street and a chinese man came down to open the door.he looked pleased to see me ,I just smiled. (...) She had collected the prize money and passed it to her pimp/trainer who was shuffling out side the door. I wasn't even offered a glass of water ,before or after the race. (worldpunter)

Seemed to think that the 15 minutes started when I arrived in the room, so handing over the cash, her disappearing to give the cash to her "pimp", returning and taking a towel then having a shower all counted against my 15 minutes, so ended up with about

6-7 minutes of sex as confirmed by checking my phone time as I left against the call I made on the doorstep as I arrived! *Better* out there! **See previous reports.** (volvic)

Olivia is a good looking girl but not by any means stunningly attractive. She is more of a *girl next door* and *not prettier than your average pimped £100 Polish or Romanian girl.* (...) I had a verbal confrontation with the pimp who angrily threatened me to not visit 'his' premises again and any of 'his' girls. He made perfectly clear that he monitored my previous visits to the neighbouring flats as well as those I had in the opposite building. According to him *'All belong to him'*. I have to say that it is not clear whether he is a pimp of these two girls or the pimp of the premises as the other 2 girls I met there were Romanians. **He is a British pimp** and from the accent he is certainly not Scottish. I am more inclined towards the premises pimp explanation and him being part of a more organised infrastructure. **The certain thing is that he is a pimp and the timekeeper of all the girls working there.** They call him 'driver'. (Einrot)

On her profile page, Rakaella (presumably a misspelling of Rafaella) is described as a "Teen Latino" though **she is no teen**, only doubtfully hispanic and is not obviously male (the last error is forgivable - I suspect that the correct use of Spanish noun endings is not the strong point **of your average Kosovan pimp**). (indianlover)

Thus, signs of possible trafficking are either entirely ignored when presented or disregarded as irrelevant. This is consistent with previous research on sex buyers that found that the suspicion of trafficking and the awareness of prostitution negatively affecting women's lives are not considered as a deterrent for buying sex (Barahona and García 2003; Durchslag and Goswami 2008; Farley et al. 2011a). The online newspaper "Third Force News" has quoted Jan Macleod, manager of the Women's Support Project in Scotland, noting that Punternet reviews can have a very negative impact on the women involved for "it is humiliating and degrading to be reviewed in such a fashion" and "it can also be used by partners or ex-partners, pimps and others to attempt to control women, for example, to threaten to post information about her or to make up reviews"⁶¹. In a series of interviews called "Inside the sex industry", Cassie, a Scottish ex-prostituted woman, spoke about her experiences working for a pimp in a flat in

⁶¹ TFN News. 2016. "Exposed: foul website promotes child sex and trafficking." Accessed on March, 27, 2017. <http://thirdforcenews.org.uk/tfn-news/exposed-foul-website-promotes-child-sex-and-trafficking>.

Edinburgh. She explains how he tried to control women from leaving. When she tried, the pimp posed as a sex buyer and wrote personal information about her in PunterNet, including that she was transsexual. Cassie describes her feelings of humiliation and frustration when she found out that sex buyers were discussing over whether her vagina was “real” or not, and says the men write “really graphic, horrendous stuff you don't want to read about yourself. Really demeaning, really degrading.”⁶² In the absence of the testimonies of the women “reviewed” in our analysis, who may give account of either their (or lack of) awareness of having been reviewed, and the way that makes them feel, hers is a very practical example of how prostituted women's lives may be negatively affected by the existence of this type of virtual communities.

Interestingly, Earle and Sharp have said that paying for sex is normal and raises no moral issues within the PunterNet community. They suggest that the absence “of any reference to these debates [that surround paying for sex in the wider community] suggests a normative order in which *the legitimacy of such questions is simply not acknowledged*” (2008a, 9, emphasis added) and that the men “feel no need to justify their actions against hostile moral positions suggests a moral world in which such debates are put aside” (2008b, 9). Indeed, paying for sex raises no moral issues within a community of sex buyers, but not for the reasons these authors offer. They claim that men who pay for sex align themselves with the debate which positions “sex work in the context of ordinary work rather than within the context of sexual violence and abuse”, and assert that “in this respect the normative world shared by men who pay for sex is quite different from prevailing attitudes towards sex workers in wider society which often defines sex workers as either moral outcasts or as the victims of men” (2008b, 14). According to them, such debates include whether prostitution dehumanises women or not. The absence of this type of debates in a community of these characteristics can be explained in a much simpler way: sex buyers are not feminists concerned over prostituted women's wellbeing. The terms “sex work” and “sex worker”, the most favoured by feminists who advocate for legalisation or decriminalisation, has not been employed to refer to prostituted women in any of the reviews analysed for this project, and this alone would indicate they do not take part on any, especially feminist, debates on prostitution.

⁶² “Inside the sex industry. Pimps and PunterNet – episode 2 of 3.” Accessed May, 16, 2017. <https://vimeo.com/155846384>.

4. Conclusions

This essay set out to analyse the discourse produced by sex buyers online. In the first chapter, we addressed the major positions within the feminist current debates on prostitution and some of the reasons for which its legal treatment is problematic for feminists, including violence against women. We considered the gendered character of prostitution as exemplifying the enactment of patriarchal power relations in a particularly clear way, for it is based on socially and economically non-egalitarian conditions between men and women and on male the sex-right to ensure men's access to women's bodies (Pateman 1988). Within the methodological framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, presented in the second chapter, Teun A. van Dijk points out that one way of enacting power is to control context, the mentally represented structure of those properties of the social situation that are relevant for the production or comprehension of discourse. Controlling context involves control over the categories that get to determine the conditions of the situation, which are relevant for the production of discourse (van Dijk 1993, 256). Power and dominance can be measured by control over (and access to) discourse. One of the tasks of Critical Discourse Analysis is to spell out these forms of power (2015, 356). According to van Dijk, the principles that define CDA entail taking the side of the oppressed. For this project, this implied not forgetting that women are “those who suffer most from dominance and inequality” (1993, 252) in patriarchal societies, in which men perpetrate violence against women as a means of control.

As PunterNet exemplifies, the creation of virtual communities for sex buyers is a direct consequence of the development of modern technologies and the gendered condition of prostitution. A typical trait of them is the option of writing public reviews of prostituted women and girls. Such communities offer the men the chance of discussing and sharing different aspects of purchasing sex in an anonymous and “safe” environment. According to a Foucaultian notion of power as both productive and relational, and enacted through discourse, we can say that individual men are, at the same time, producers of the patriarchal discourse of power, active participants in the application of such discourse and the embodied vehicle of its practical, innumerable manifestations. Thus, men enact power relations through day-to-day words and acts that

have been normalised as if they were inherent to their nature. As Sally McConell Ginett has said, using language is “a socially situated action, profoundly embedded in the patriarchal sociocultural matrix that supports structural non-egalitarian relations between men and women” (1992, 199). Thus, as members of the socially privileged group, male subjects create discourses that justify, legitimate, and perpetuate gender-based inequality.

Beyond other aspects of prostitution as a gendered practice, there are not any mass-scale, culturally equivalent online communities for female sex buyers of male prostitutes where heterosexual women discuss sex purchase and rate male prostitutes publicly: only men have the opportunity to produce such a discourse at a large scale, which means they have total control over this particular type of context and its social consequences. Importantly, such opportunity is not strictly dependent on factors such as class or race but is offered to men for the fact of being men, that is: it is granted to men as a group. The heterosexual male is the prototype of sex buyer. Even after new forms of sexualities have appeared, the act of paying for sex continues to be a male privilege in patriarchal societies.

As we have seen, sex buyers control the totality of the review system in PunterNet: they decide if writing, when, what is going to be shared (and what not), how, about whom. Their expectations and the way they deal with their encounter with the women determine the result. The patriarchal notion according to which prostituted women are communal (male) property justifies the existence of virtual communities such as the one in PunterNet within a society that would not find legitimate for husbands and boyfriends to publicly expose the sexual lives of wives and girlfriends online, rating them either positively or negatively on behalf of other men. In such a context, we have addressed the act of “reviewing” prostituted women as a specific type of discourse, which belongs to the written modality. The reviews are texts, linguistic records of certain communicative events — pieces of an ongoing communicative process that takes place every day online. The men (and, indirectly, women and girls rated by them) are the actors of the social practice that is the double-sided act of buying/selling sex. Even if the activity of reviewing is multi-faced — there are different approaches and goals to it depending on the sex buyer and the way the encounter went — it is possible to find certain patterns that reveal the reason(s) for the whole review

system to exist.

One of the main aims of “the act of reviewing” is that men have the opportunity to construct a *one-sided* version of the encounter with the prostituted individual, and to create and determine the “ideal” terms and conditions under which they want the prostitution contract to take place, hence controlling the context for the production of discourse. Women are technically and systematically voiceless in this particular practice. Effectively, they do not get the chance to define themselves or tell their side of the story. In this sense, the discourse produced by the sex buyers is a form of symbolic violence. Ultimately, sex buyers' discourse (re)produces gendered power relations based on the social dominance of men over women. As part of the political commitment with the oppressed inherent to Critical Discourse Analysis, we have tried to recover the women's voices — they do speak in one way or another through the discourse their prostitutes construct about them.

As we have seen along the third chapter, the analysis of the reviews labelled as positive reveals that these are written examples of male self-complacency. The traits highlighted as positive belong to the semantic field of (female) serviceability and the feeding of masculine ego. No self-criticism has been found in the samples. These reviews epitomise a conscious romanticisation and sexualisation of masculine dominance on the part of sex buyers. The systematic objectification of women permeates the language they employ. Their lexical choices prove they do not intend to establish a commercial-type of relationship based on equality and mutual respect. Sex buyers value signs of feminine sexual fulfilment under masculine conditions, and only in that sense is that they appreciate (the faking of) female orgasms. Ideally, they want the women to genuinely enjoy working on pleasing them in every sense, to accommodate to their desires and to passionately embrace the kind of serviceable role that feeds their male egotism. They demand to see the confirmation of the masculine superior status in the prostitute's behaviour.

The economic power enacted in *the act of buying sex* cannot be ignored or disregarded as a mere insignificant detail. There are two core pieces to prostitution: one party wants sex, the other does not. The former *has* money, the latter *needs* money. The payment of money symbolically and effectively excludes female sexual pleasure (and women's own conditions in general⁶³) from the prostitution contract. Our data show the

⁶³This does not intend to deny individual women's ability and potentiality to resist that, but the fact that they

definition of a “good service” is based on female submission to male terms and the withdrawal of her personal will. Sex buyers pay for female sexual desire not to count and for them to completely relinquish their freedom. Paying for the right not to have to worry about sexually pleasing the other party makes them feel they have the “right” to ask for more and to not respect her boundaries. Indeed, the money factor implies a power imbalance in their interaction with prostituted women and, thus, it makes the men feel entitled to the exertion of power. They push the woman's limits, and do so actively, possibly even violently. The money factor blurs the meaning of the “no is no” feminist mantra aiming at making men respect women's sexual freedom and boundaries in any context besides and beyond prostitution. As Julia O'Connell Davidson puts it, it is not “sex or sexual labour” what is exchanged in the prostitution contract. A sex buyer pays money in order to secure powers over the prostitute's person that he could not otherwise exercise: “he pays in order that he may direct the prostitute to make body orifices available to him, to smile, dance, or dress up for him, to whip, spank, urinate upon, massage, or masturbate him, to submit to being urinated upon, shackled, or beaten by him, or otherwise act to meet his desires” (2002, 86).

As we have seen, the men consciously use the review system of PunterNet to demand specific requirements based on a male fantasy of absolute dominance. They intend to subject prostituted women into accepting and (re)producing a self-coerced role linked to what they call a “good service.” If the positive reviews show the men feel *entitled* to female compliance and are happy to find it, the “unfortunate” encounters narrated in the negative ones prove sexual relations that take place in prostitution to be just the wrap of male expectations of dominance. Their anger and resentment arise when such expectations are not met. In the reviews labelled as *negative*, they express their anger and frustration over what they consider to be the “inappropriate” behaviour of prostituted women and girls. In all cases, they point at the women as the only ones held accountable for working as prostitutes, without ever taking responsibility for their own role as sex buyers — even in cases where control by pimps was evident, something in clear contradiction with the free exercise of the “profession.” The self-indulgent objectifying language characteristic of the positive reviews turns into an overtly violent language in the negative ones, indicating traits of a hostile type of masculinity which

may have “to resist” proves the logics of prostitution are not on their side. Besides, the possibilities for effective resistance are dependent on the conditions of a given specific context.

reveals misogynistic attitudes that come close to violence against women. Prostitution dehumanises women, not because they dehumanise themselves by being involved in prostitution, but because of the sex buyers' tendency to objectify and dehumanise them. The potentially dangerous consequences this may have on men's actual interactions with them cannot be regarded as irrelevant.

Claims made in favour of prostitution entail that sex is a “human” (male) need and defend that women have “the right” to sell their bodies to men. They conceal the fact that it is men's *right to buy* and male expectations of women's subservience that is at stake in the prostitution contract. The defence according to which male heterosexual population has the need and the right to (buy) sex from whoever they want, means that a contingent of women must be systematically denied their *own* need and right to have sex with whoever they want. This essentially different way of treating sexual relations protects the patriarchal *status quo* and has negative consequences for feminists' aim of gender equality in society. Ronald Weitzer epitomises what prostitution survivors Vednita Carter and Evelina Giobbe have called “the most disturbing aspect” (2006, 31) of the defence of prostitution as just “work”, which is informed on a hierarchy based on race and class privilege. This gender-blind ideology does not take social power relations into account and does not consider relevant the fact that are women of colour and poor women those overwhelmingly found in prostitution.

A white male academic himself who does not have to do “sex work”, Ronald Weitzer has claimed that “relationships between workers and customers” “are complex and varied”, which has been “empirically documented” (2010, 17). Human relationships, in general, can be said to be both complex and varied, so that suggests nothing about the specificity of the relationship that can be established between men and women within the prostitution contract. But Weitzer is particularly interested in *denying* that such relationships *may* be exploitative and/or violent. He wants to stress the “shock value” “of labelling prostitution as paid rape, workers as prostituted women or survivors, and customers as predators and sex offenders”, as if such terms had been created by feminist academics who hate sexual freedom. In fact, as we have seen, similar terms are used by survivors themselves, but that seems not to have any value for Weitzer, who goes as far as calling ex-prostituted testimonies' “anecdotal horror stories” (17). By doing so, he implies that such testimonies are not a serious empirical proof of

the harms of prostitution and, thus, intends to invalidate their voices.

Margaret A. Baldwin has written about the “great anguish and frustration” in her “attempt to render women's pain into words, cast to the kindness of strangers” (Baldwin 2006, 108). She recalls similar feelings expressed by Kathleen Barry at seeing how society accepts the abuse of women and the many times she felt as if her “heart would break — an emotion men condemn as a failure of objectivity.” And yet, she wrote, “I realize that it is the stifling of such emotion that creates the conditions of violence and slavery. I've come to recognize in a way I've never before known so deeply and powerfully the extent to which emotionless objectivity leads directly to objectification — the starting point of violence, particularly sexual violence (Barry 1979, 215).

In their investigation of prostitution across nine countries, Melissa Farley and her team found that 75% of the Canadian women they interviewed suffered injuries from violence that occurred *during* prostitution, which included “stabblings and beatings, concussions, broken bones (broken jaws, ribs, collar bones, fingers, spines, skulls)” (2004, 59). Weitzer accuses other investigators of doing biased research when such research finds violence in prostitution. However, he does not explain how it is less biased and more “scientific” to systematically dismiss violence against prostituted women by treating cases as those in Canada as “not representative.” Whether representative or not, they are cases of *real men* dealing with *real women* and, as such, they *do* prove that violence does occur often in prostitution. A possible line of investigation may be to explore, particularly in a country where prostitution has been legalised, such as Germany, the differences between the type of violence against prostituted German women and the violence against, for example, German women lawyers or doctors. To be sure, violence against women is not one of Weitzer's priorities. Ultimately, he does not want to advocate for women's rights, but to protect male sex-right to access women's bodies.

Certainly, violence against women is a worldwide problem, and female prostitutes are in actual danger due to heterosexual male sex buyers' misogynistic bias. By shifting the focus from sex buyers' attitudes toward anti-prostitution activists' “oppressive” terms, Weitzer aims at demonising his ideological rivals. He disregards the “moral objections to prostitution” since they “could easily be applied to commercial

advertisements and to the entertainment industry more broadly, where sexual objectification of women is pervasive” (2010, 13). Indeed, sexual objectification of women is pervasive, but why can *that* be used against anti-prostitution academics and survivors and, conversely, as a pro-prostitution argument, Weitzer does not explain it. Sexual objectification of women in other fields is denounced by feminist activists too. The fact that such objectification is pervasive *also* in prostitution is not a reason not to fight prostitution, but actually a reason to do it. By admitting that “sexual objectification of women is pervasive” in the so-called “entertainment industry”, Weitzer implicitly legitimates sexual objectification as a *business* that *entertains* (men), and shows he himself endorses an objectifying attitude against women, proving his pro “sex work” ideology to be at the service of the protection of patriarchal *status quo*.

Real, face-to-face interactions between men and women within the prostitution contract would need to be fair and equal for “sex workers” not to suffer male violence under a policy of decriminalisation or legalisation. However, the sex buyers' recounts indicate they regard the objectification and dehumanisation of the women as *inherent* to prostitution. They feel entitled to produce discourse about women and take for granted the legitimacy of whichever way they decide to do it. Sex buyers' construction of an ideal type of heterosexual liaisons based on the notion of “good service”, in which female (real) sexual desire is not rendered as *necessary* for sex to take place, is likely to feed their feelings of entitlement to non-consensual sex and to negatively affect their relations with women outside the context of prostitution too. Also, as we have seen, certain sexual practices that put prostituted women and girls at high risk of contracting venereal diseases or getting pregnant are often called “basic services” in this community. Thus, there is evidence from the buyers themselves supporting the claims made by anti-prostitution researchers and survivors according to which it is a degrading and violent practice rather than just “work.” For prostitution to be less dangerous and damaging for women, sex buyers' sexual requirements should actually have to *change*, something that falls far from the scope of legalisation and decriminalisation. Ultimately, legitimising the enactment of men's economic power to buy a male fantasy based on non-egalitarian conditions implicitly supports, justifies and perpetuates gender inequality and violence against women at a larger scale.

As we noted at the beginning of this project, Ken Plummer highlights that

human sexuality is not biologically fixed, but both “symbolic and meaningful”, and “linked to power” (187). Sex it is never *just sex*: “it does not exist in a social vacuum but is flooded with the social” (187). This author maintains that “the traditional or fantasy model of sex is being replaced by a new model of sex that is not focused on the qualities that characterise the model of the hegemonic male sexuality, which tends to presume the idea of a *male heterosexual identity* (190). Indeed, Plummer asserts, the “grand story of male sexuality” does continue, but it has been now challenged from many sides (188). He considers society is moving into a new set of relationships, for women are “repositioning themselves in relation to power and being under control, which pushes the definitions of male sexualities” (190). Although this is true in many senses, our data indicates sex buyers look for the confirmation of the “grand story” in prostitution, where they can legitimately request a self-coerced, subservient role of women and enact traditional gender roles without being effectively challenged. Thus, prostitution damages all women by providing a locus for the enactment of a type of masculinity with overt misogynistic bias, where male ego and his sexual fulfilment are central and where money buys the right to disregard women's sexual desire, health and wellbeing.

Behind the business-related terminology sex buyers employ there is the ever present desire to use their economic power to enact the patriarchal fantasy of domination on women's bodies. Foucault pointed out that power relations are inscribed upon the body and that “where there is power, there is also resistance” (1990, 95). The body, thus, can be a bastion of resistance. Prostituted women's will of keeping physical and emotional boundaries, something that has become evident in many instances along this analysis, is a form of resistance to sex buyers' requirement of utter abnegation that suggests the women's rejection to comply completely with prostitutes' conditions. Symptoms of dissociation are the consequence of the struggle between the male fantasy of domination they are required to satisfy and their own requirements based on the freedom of their intimate selves. To survive in prostitution, Rachel Moran felt the necessity to split herself into her “authentic self” (for the people who did not pay her for sex) and the “imaginary version” (to distance herself from those who did). As she has put it: “This extreme reluctance to merge the truth of her identity with her client's perception of it is actually the strongest evidence of a woman's rejection of her own

participation in prostitution” (2013, 143). This bodily resistance alone suggests the picture would be very different if women as a group had similar economic and social power to that of men.

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PunterNet UK

Review of Cornelia of London

Review No. 124245 - Published 24 Mar 2017

Details of Visit:

Author: Magnus

Type of Visit: Outcall

Date and Time of Visit: Mon 20 Mar 2017 19:00

Duration of Visit: 2 Hours

Amount Paid: 400

Recommended: Yes

Details of Service Provider:

Profile Name: Top Secret Escorts *Top London Girls*

Website: <http://www.topsecretescorts.co.uk/>

Phone: 07900072555

The Premises:

The Lady:

A very lovely and friendly Polish young lady with tons of girlie charm. She has a very happy personality and a beautiful laughter. She is very pretty as photos show. Body a bit larger. Beautiful girl-next-door type teenage girl. 1,62 m tall. 18 y.o.

The Story:

No doubt one of the very best girlfriend experiences I've had. Cornelia is amazingly sweet and charming, overwhelming me with passionate kisses. I met this lovely lady first time when she was all new to the business and met her now for the 4th time. She started escorting last autumn and has already earned "top girl" status indicating high recommendation from agency. I'm very impressed by her attitude and she has indeed a strong and passionate performance. This girl loves sex and she is really pushing herself to do more and better in all respects. So pretty face and girlie charming laughter. She may be a bit chubby, but in a beautiful way. Wow, in doggy position her proportions looks spectacular with firm bum and thighs. She gives you her full attention, is very polite and has a professional behaviour. She hasn't perfected skills yet, but she is still learning and developing. To sum all my impressions up: I think this lady is a little star! I'm thrilled to follow how good this girl can get if she keeps up her progress as an escort. One of my top favourite girls for sure.

Appendix A

Critical discourse analysis of positive review: the case of “Cornelia”

This sex buyer uses positive remarks to describe the girl because he was satisfied with the outcome of the encounter. The adjectives and expressions used are three different types: those selected to point out her attitude during their meeting (“very lovely,” “friendly,” “very happy personality,” “beautiful laughter”) coloured by the adverb “very” used several times; body-related terms and expressions (“very pretty,” “Body a bit larger,” “Beautiful,” “1,62 m tall”); and those aimed at remarking her young age as something positive: there are up to four different expressions only in the first four lines of the review to point out her youth (“tons of girlie charm,” “Polish young lady,” “girl-next-door type teenage girl”, “18 y.o.”). This indicates he highly values the fact that she is so young. As the great majority of sex buyers, he does not provide information about his own age. With the first sentence, he notes this has been one of his best experiences at buying sex: “No doubt one of the very best girlfriend experiences I’ve had.” The general tone is of approvement and satisfaction, where he builds up the illusion that she “genuinely” liked him: “Cornelia is *amazingly sweet* and *charming*, overwhelming me with passionate kisses.”

Euphemisms and different formulae to avoid to mention directly the money factor and address the power unbalance within the prostitution contract are common in the reviews of PunterNet, especially in the positive ones. This instance is a good example of that. He goes round the payment fact constantly, making use of certain lexical choices that imply that purchasing sex from a young girl is normal and legitimate: “I met this *lovely lady* first time when she was all new to **the business** and met her now for the 4th time.” The expression “lovely lady” gives the impression of her being both friendly and mature. He had called her a “teenager” only a couple of lines before, so it seems important for him now to imply that “she knows what she does” despite her youth. This expression, along with the verb “met” supports the illusion of the encounter being non-commercial, as if they had actually just “met.” He also calls prostitution “the business”, but does not call her “sex worker” at any time (as previously noted, the term pro-prostitution campaigners usually prefer). A straightforward, much

more honest option that would unmask the economic factor and the gendered power relations involved in this prostituted-prostitute relationship would have been: “I purchased sex from this **foreign teenager girl** first time when she has just started **in prostitution** and I paid her for sex now for the 4th time.” The original sentence is certainly better-sounding, and thus more euphemistic than the one suggested.

He regards as relevant to highlight that she has “improved” a lot in a very short time, as the adverb *already* shows in: “She started escorting last autumn and has already earned ”top girl” status indicating high recommendation from agency.” Again, “started escorting” is better sounding than “started in prostitution”, but, above all, the expression disregards or is neutral about whether or how such a young girl “decided” to become a prostitute. As in all the other reviews (both positive and negative), the reasons for which young girls and women find themselves in prostitution are not relevant for sex buyers. Here, thanks to this remark we get to know that she is not working independently, but for an agency. The verb “earned” implies that she has worked for something and deserves a prize, and such prize is the “top girl” recommendation from the people she works for. “Agency” is not a deciding individual that can give status to people, so this is a case of nominalisation, “in which people are removed and therefore responsibility for the action has been removed too, making events as if they just 'happen” (Machin and Mayr 2012, 142). So, he deliberately says nothing about *who* are the people she is working for, nor about the conditions under which she is put to work by them.

He is more concerned with stressing that she is in prostitution primarily because of the sex: “I’m *very impressed* by her attitude and she has *indeed a strong and passionate performance*. **This girl loves sex** and she is really pushing herself to do more and better in all respects.” This statement implies that money is not her priority. Such a belief is very important for most sex buyers. The word “performance” here suggests awareness of the need of acting on the part of the women, but the adjectives “strong” and “passionate” support the illusion that she is not, in fact, acting. “*So pretty face and girlie charming laughter*. She may be a *bit chubby, but in a beautiful way*. Wow, in doggy position her proportions looks [sic] *spectacular* with *firm* bum and thighs.” He wants to portray her as the feminine type of girl, as do other expressions of the text such as “amazingly sweet”, and “girlie” and “charming” to speak about her laughter (the latter implying that she was enjoying his company “for real”).

By the manner he recounts the encounter, it is difficult to know whether she was acting or not, as women in prostitution may develop different ways of dissociating body and self. For example, Maddy Coy has noted how one of her participants developed a dissociative coping mechanism that differed from “pretending not to be there” although also based on acting differently than the self was feeling: “Punters always used to say to me, most prostitutes just lie there but you don’t. You know what I mean? If I lay there, that’s when I’d think I don’t want to be doing this, I’d know then myself (Becky, 17).” Coy notes how blocking out the reality of the encounter required for Becky a performance where she disembodied herself by presenting herself as “actively deriving pleasure from the sexual interaction with each buyer.” Her experience, as Coy points out, demonstrates that women in prostitution use multiple ways to manage commercial sex transactions, but these are nonetheless based on the constitutive force of a dissociative performance (Coy, 2009: 69). Sex buyer’ recounts of female pleasure feed a generalised belief according to which women in prostitution are there because they like it, so they *should not* be in it if they do *not* like it, as we will see in the analysis of the next review, labelled as “negative.” Additionally, he does not consider the social stigma attached to prostitution and the way it may affect her life.

There are a number of expressions used by this sex buyer that are not easily definable by themselves in the present context, but other details that compound the text reveal their meaning. “She gives you her full attention, is very polite and has a **professional behaviour**”. The adjective *professional* which has also been addressed in the general analysis,⁶⁴ is inevitably linked to the workplace; a “professional attitude” can be recommended to anyone who wants to keep their job; to be professional implies to be useful and efficient. In general, when referring to a working person, it suggests that s/he is capable of doing things well. The term seems problematic when used in a prostitution-related context, but particularly when used by a sex buyer. What does it mean for a prostitute to be professional, according to the man who pays her for sex? The assert “She hasn’t **perfected skills yet, but she is still learning and developing**” poses similar problems. Although it is meant *as a compliment* on his part, for it suggests that someone is working on doing something well, the implications are problematic nonetheless.⁶⁵ There are a number of expressions belonging to the semantic field of

⁶⁴ See page 65 for the connotations of the term “professional” when used by sex buyers.

⁶⁵ See page 68 for the problem of the “skills” necessary for the “job.”

servitude remarked as positive in the attitude of the girl. This clearly shows that one of the priorities of the sex buyer is “to be served” and shows he is paying for the enactment of the traditional gender roles reserved for men and women. When he says “This girl loves sex” what he is really saying is that “This girl loves pleasing men sexually,” rather than that she loves sex *per se*. This is further proved by other expressions found in the present text, such as “she is really pushing herself to do *more and better* in all respects” and “She gives you her full attention.”

Although he does not provide explicit information on *what is it exactly* what implies “to do more and better in all respects”, in a context that involves men paying for sexual practices we can infer that he highly values that she “pushes herself” *to please men* more and better in all respects. This certainly does not conceal anymore the fact that, not only that he knows she is *not* having sex for herself because she loves sex, but that he does not expect so. This way of recounting the encounter works in favour of the review system which is fundamentally based on giving recommendations, through the use of the pronoun “you.” Instead of writing “She gave me her full attention”, he rephrases his experience to make a positive recommendation for the other men in the community. Such recommendation is strongly based on the fact that she is very young and that she made this particular sex buyer feel like a king.

The word “progress” is meant to make prostitution look like an eligible and legitimate choice of a “career” for young girls, and does the word “escort.” “I’m thrilled to follow how...”, is a formula that conceals the role of money in his relationship with her. Ultimately, he is saying: “This girl can be a *good prostitute*. I will continue purchasing her for sex” but his lexical choices sound better and naturalise the act of paying a teenager for sex. Rather than a very explicit account of the sexual encounter (in this case, only one sentence recalls a sex act explicitly, which is not usual), this is a portrayal of the ideal prostitute, linked to a desired model of femininity. This review is a deliberate defence of the “happy hooker” myth, which plays an important role in the minds of johns. There is overlexicalisation of the kind of business-related terms that many sex buyers use to legitimate the purchase of sex, *regardless* of the age or the circumstances of the girl/woman.

<p>Terms and expressions to speak of her body:</p> <p>“very pretty as photos show”</p> <p>“Body a bit larger”</p> <p>“Beautiful”</p> <p>“1,62 m tall”</p> <p>“So pretty face”</p> <p>“her proportions looks [sic] spectacular”</p> <p>“firm bum and thighs”</p> <p>“bit chubby, but in a beautiful way”</p>	<p>Words/Expressions that refer to her:</p> <p>“Polish young lady”, “lovely lady”, “lady”</p> <p>“girl-next-door type teenage girl”, “top girl' status”, “This girl” (2), “One of my top favourite girls”</p> <p>“escort”</p> <p>“little star”</p>
<p>Expressions that emphasise her youth:</p> <p>“tons of girlie charm”</p> <p>“Polish young lady”</p> <p>“girl-next-door type teenage girl”</p> <p>“18 y.o.”</p> <p>“girlie charming laughter”</p>	<p>Business-related terms and expressions:</p> <p>“She has already earned”</p> <p>“indicating high recommendation from agency”</p> <p>“[she] has a professional behaviour”</p> <p>“pushing herself”</p> <p>“do more and better in all respects”</p> <p>“strong and passionate performance”</p> <p>“perfected skills”</p> <p>“learning and developing”</p> <p>“how good this girl can get”</p> <p>“progress as an escort”</p>

PunterNet UK

Review of Sian of Manchester

Review No. 98865 - Published 20 Jul 2010

Details of Visit:

Author: Willie Wanker

Location 2: Sale

Type of Visit: Incall

Date and Time of Visit: Sun 18 Jul 2010 4pm

Duration of Visit: 30

Amount Paid: 45

Recommended: No

Details of Service Provider:

Profile Name: Bliss Massage

Website: <http://www.bliss-massage.co.uk>

Phone: 01619623722

The Premises:

Very nicely decorated parlour, round the back of some shops - although its also near a Sainsburys and people standing outside a pub opposite might see you going in or out. Also, there were no tissues in the room.

The Lady:

Only 18 or so, very petite - probably less than 5ft tall, tiny boobs.

The Story:

Probably the strangest punt I've ever had. Passing through the Manc area decided to give somewhere a try for half an hour. Was met by Sian at the door, so was happy to take her. No receptionist and no sign of anyone else there. Led into very nice room, paid then I took a shower.

Sian wasn't terribly good at putting me at my ease and told me to make sure I dried myself properly. She decided I was still too wet when I got on the bed and then told me to dry myself again. When I got back on the bed she gave me a hand job while I played with her breasts before giving me some quite good oral. Unfortunately she ignored me asking her to stop and I came in her mouth. She then offered me a massage but instead of actually giving me one asked me lots of questions about my life. When I mentioned that I work in academia she started complaining about how educated people apparently look down on people like her, and claiming that there is no point going to uni etc. What a good way to alienate your audience! She mentioned she has two social workers, and it seems she moved away from her parents at 18 to become a prostitute. Then she took a shower, and that was it.

I don't know if this girl is just immature or actually has issues, but either way she is better avoided, because she has a really annoying attitude and perhaps mistrusts punters. My experience of younger girls is not great generally, but Sian seemed particularly bad at creating a good atmosphere and making the punter feel welcome. Instead she gave me the impression that punters are ruining her life. I told her that if she doesn't feel comfortable with the job she shouldn't do it.

All this is a real shame, as the parlour was very comfortable and there are not many girls this young

or as petite around. As it is, Sian succeeded only in reminding me why its best to avoid younger ladies.

Critical discourse analysis of negative review: the case of “Sian”

The sex buyer starts by describing her as “very petite - probably less than 5ft tall, tiny boobs” of the girl, who is “only 18 or so”, as Cornelia from the previous review. The word “only” here is meant to be positive, as the end of the review suggests. He does not hide his experience at buying sex: “Probably the strangest punt I've ever had.” As in all the analysed reviews, this john values immensely that prostituted women work to “create a good atmosphere” to make him comfortable and puts emphasis on it as her responsibility. “Sian wasn't terribly good at putting me at my ease and told me to make sure I dried myself *properly*. She decided I was *still* too wet when I got on the bed and *then* told me to dry myself *again*”. The verb “decided”, as opposed to more neutral options such as “thought” or “commented” gives the impression that she is unnecessarily bossy and capricious. The whole review makes her look impolite and ill-tempered, as occurs in the very structure of the sentence. Had the sentence being constructed differently, the depiction of the girl may have been positive, i.e “I was still too wet when I got on the bed, so she told me to dry myself again.” In the proposed example, he would admit he is too wet and that it was right of her to ask him to dry himself again, whereas the original sentence implicitly states that he was already dry and was not necessary for him to do it again, hence her behaviour been cheeky.

The verb “played” portrays him as wanting to have nothing more than legitimate, innocent fun, in: “When I got back on the bed she gave me a hand job me while I played with her breasts before giving me some quite good oral. *Unfortunately* she ignored me asking her to stop and I came in her mouth.” In this case, the reader can read between lines and infer that she did *not* want to have intercourse (and she actually succeeded at avoiding it), which is probably why she “ignored him” when he asked her to stop doing oral sex. The verb “ignored” depicts her as stubborn and rebellious, and implies that she should have had listened and obeyed for him to be happy. Sex buyers do not take well when the women seem not to want intercourse and try to finish them through oral sex or masturbation. This has been found several times in the negative reviews.

He portrays himself under a positive light through the selection of verbs. He was “asking her” to stop, which insinuates he was being polite, rather than “telling her” or

“urging her,” of a more commanding nature. So, what the text states implicitly is that, *despite* him being polite, she was ungrateful and behaved inappropriately. Then, he writes: “She *then offered me* a massage *but instead of actually* giving me one asked me lots of questions about my life. When I mentioned that I work in academia she started complaining about how **educated people** *apparently* look down on **people like her**, and claiming that there is no point going to uni etc. What a good way to alienate your audience! She mentioned she has two social workers, and it seems she moved away from her parents at 18 to become a prostitute. Then she took a shower, and that was it.” This is the only review found where a sex buyer gives information about his profession, but he mentions this only casually, to further prove how annoying both this young girl and the situation were. Different lexical choices would have made her look as a sensitive person i.e “She spoke about how educated people look down on people like her” or “She told me about how educated people look down on people like her.” Through the selection of verbs and adverbs that prove an annoyed and sceptical attitude on his part, he portrays her as childish and unreasonable.

He doubts of her perception and mocks her for saying that there is no point in studying in university and insinuates how inappropriate the comment was. His attitude, paradoxically, shows that he *does* look down on her, as she said “educated people” do. He depicts her an ignorant girl with a capricious behaviour and bad character. This sex buyer does provide information about her life conditions, but he considers them irrelevant. He makes no further comments on the fact that she has two social workers or that she left her parent's house — and why. He keeps on using formulae that make everything she says look suspicious and doubtful, such as “it seems she...”. The next sentence implies that she had made a free, well-thought choice to “move away from” her parents (rather than “left”, “flew”, or even “escaped from”) at 18 [in order] *to become* a prostitute. He openly informs the reader that she is not living with her parents but nothing is said about where, or who with, she is living. And no concern is shown for the girl as a person, no empathy regarding the likely anxiety of her separation from her family, nor concern about the fact that the situation has thwarted her education.

A paragraph follows where he problematises her behaviour and states why other johns should avoid purchasing her for sex: “I don't know if this girl is *just* **immature** or *actually* **has issues**, but *either way* she is better avoided, because she has a **really**

annoying attitude and *perhaps mistrusts punters.*” He suggests that “*perhaps she mistrusts punters*”, but his general depiction of her makes this comment look like she has no reason to distrust and that she is just unstable. At any case, the problem is not him: his age, his body, his character, his attitude towards her, his role as sex buyer, seem not to be possible reasons for her behaviour. The consideration that she might actually have good reasons to distrust sex buyers and that men might have been abusive towards her during her life are not taken into consideration. He adds: “*My experience of younger girls is not great generally, but Sian seemed particularly bad at creating a good atmosphere and making the punter feel welcome.*” The first part of the sentence euphemistically refers to his role as sex buyer, invisibilising the payment of money and his complete disregard for the life conditions of the girls. More honest options would have been: “My experience of purchasing sex from young girls is not great generally” or “My experience of paying teenagers to have sex with me is not great generally.”

He also asserts: “*Instead she gave me the **impression** that punters are ruining her life. I told her that *if she doesn't feel comfortable with the job she shouldn't do it.*” Thus, he distances himself from the other sex buyers, avoiding to say “perhaps she mistrusts **us**” or “**we** are ruining her life.” With such linguistic strategy, he shows he is incapable to feel empathy for her. He takes no responsibility in the fact that she finds herself selling sex to men, despite being obvious to him that doing it makes her life miserable and that she does it because she is socially vulnerable and grown-up men like him are willing to pay her for sex. Instead, he advises her to stop working as a prostitute if she does not like it. This implies that, in his opinion, she is the ultimate responsible for her decision of working as a prostitute. The oversimplification of the circumstances and decisions of girls and women in prostitution is found often, as many johns allow themselves to speak for them and state that she *wants* to be there and *enjoys* it (as in the positive analysed previously) while assert that she *should not* do it if she doesn't like it/want to, as in the present case.*

When he may not tell this story in a different social context (for example, during a break at the workplace or a family meeting), the mention of his job and the youth of a girl he purchases for sex, suggest he is unlikely to feel morally bad-judged by the PunterNet audience of sex buyers and that it is taken for granted to be acceptable for a grown-up man that works in academia to pay socially vulnerable teenagers for sex. To

conclude, he expresses both his disappointment and his liking of having sex with teenagers: “All this is a real shame, as the parlour was very comfortable and *there are not many girls this young or as petite around*” (emphasis added). Here, “all this” refers to such a young “petite” girl not being accommodating and willing to satisfy him sexually, which is what bothers him. And he continues: “As it is, Sian succeeded only in reminding me why its [sic] best to avoid younger ladies”. The expression “younger ladies” conceals, again, the fact that he is speaking about young girls. Ultimately, and as opposed to the sex buyer who reviewed Cornelia positively, this one reviews Sian negatively for being both an example of a “bad service provider” and an *undesired model of woman*.

PunterNet UK

Review of Yumi of Luton

Review No. 124079 - Published 21 Feb 2017

Details of Visit:

Author: Transit

Type of Visit: Incall

Date and Time of Visit: Sun 19 Feb 2017 15:00

Duration of Visit: 20 Minutes

Amount Paid: 40

Recommended: Yes

Details of Service Provider:

Phone: 07765057602

The Premises:

Flat in the Dallow area of Luton. Parking on narrow side street. Entrance to the front straight off the street which some might find a bit public.

The Lady:

Tall, skinny, almost no tits, pert little bum and the very "flat" face of a girl typical of northern China.

The Story:

I got to the flat and parked, phoned to check the girl was available, she was, so rang the bell and was shown in. I told the guy that I wanted to have a look at the girl first. I entered the dark room to view the girl and decide if I wanted to do business. Just about enough light to see she was just my type.

She was wearing a little miniskirt and lacey top. Her legs were lovely and long with nice knees and lower thighs. Definitely a punt for me so handed over the cash which she handed to the guy the other side of the door.

She then began to undress me, folding my clothes and putting them on the massage table, which I hoped was not just to use up time. She felt my hardening cock through my pants before pulling them down and off. "You too big cock" she said.

She then slipped her skirt down to reveal a nice pair of tight buttocks and a lovely thigh gap.

I was going to enjoy this girl a lot and bent her over the bed to work on her pussy and arse, probing her as deep as I could with my tongue. I then laid her on her back and pushed her legs high and wide. She was nice and pink inside and when I pulled her hood back she had a surprisingly large clitoris which I licked and flicked with my tongue. She tasted very good.

On with the condom and she obligingly held her legs up as I offered the end of my cock to her wet pussy. I pushed myself in deep and stayed still as I played with her almost flat chest. I then rhythmically pumped her for a surprisingly long time while massaging her tiny tits and sucking her nipples.

Too soon it was time to cum so I pushed in deep impaling her on my big cock and blew my load. She cleaned me up nicely and even offered a massage but I settled for playing with her tits and arse before dressing.

I wish that Chinese girls would shave their pussies, that would be the icing on the cake.

Critical discourse analysis of positive review: the case of “Yumi”

This is one of the cases where the sex buyer meets a pimp. He describes the girl briefly by omitting verbs and emphasising physical traits: “*Tall, skinny, almost **no tits**, *pert little bum* and the very *'flat' face* of a **girl** typical of northern China.” On the very first sentence, it becomes obvious that the sex buyer is not arranging anything directly with her. In “phoned to check the girl was available, she was, so rang the bell and was shown in” we can see how he omits the subject of the call and avoids calling him *pimp*, but just “the guy”, a highly neutral term. There are details in the text that suggest the girl might be kept in bad conditions, as the sex buyer writes “I told the guy that I wanted to have a look at the girl first. I entered *the dark room* to view the girl and decide if I wanted to do business. *Just about enough light* to see she was just **my** type.” So, in the room where she was there was “just about enough” light to see. He treats all this as a mere transaction and views the girl as a product. Business-related language helps the sex buyer to legitimate his actions *regardless* of the circumstances. In contrast with the first sex buyer who, as we have seen, put emphasis on the fact that Cornelia “liked sex”, the wilfulness of “Yumi” is totally irrelevant here. He points out what she was wearing and selectively describes her body naming her “lovely long” legs, her “nice knees” and “lower thighs”, further fetishising and objectifying her. The sentence “Definitely a punt **for me** so handed over the cash” makes clear the power unbalance within the prostituted-prostitutor relationship.*

He uses verbs in an active form to speak of her when the acts that are pointed out are seen as good and positive in her behaviour. These are, particularly, “She then began to undress me”, “she felt my hardening cock through my pants before pulling them down and off” and “She then slipped her skirt down to reveal a nice pair of *tight buttocks* and a *lovely thigh gap*.” Linguistically speaking, he had denied her agency so far, but now he takes the focus off him to remark she was accommodating. With “folding my clothes and putting them on the massage table” he takes notice of an act of domestic serviceability that he values and shows he likes her being docile. The next sentence is the only one where she is given voice by the sex buyer. Significantly, it is a self-complacent remark to speak about his own penis: “You too big cock' she said.” He uses inverted commas, so we can assume that he is quoting literally what she said. The

sentence is not grammatically well-constructed, so the most obvious inference is that she might not speak English well.

From here on, all the lexical choices made by the sex buyer reveal his belief that sex is something men do to, and not with, women. The phrase “I was going to enjoy this girl a lot” proves the potential enjoyment to be unidirectional and his awareness of that. It further objectifies her as the same construction could be used to speak of a meal, as when he states “She tasted very good.”. Additionally, the sex buyer gives high detail on the fact he makes her suffer passively the sexual acts he imposes upon her and graphically describes her genitalia: “(...) bent her over the bed to work on her **pussy** and **arse**, probing her as deep as I could with my tongue. I then laid her on her back and pushed her legs high and wide. She was nice and *pink* inside and when I pulled her hood back she had a surprisingly large clitoris which I licked and flicked with my tongue. She tasted very good. On with the condom and she obligingly held her legs up as I offered the end of my cock *to her wet pussy*. I pushed myself in deep and stayed still as I played with her almost flat chest.” He lingers on his sexual performance (he “impales her on his big cock” and “pumped her for a *surprisingly long time*”) and portrays himself as being dominating as part of a “manly” attitude. He then uses verbs in active form again only when it comes to say that she “cleaned him up nicely” and “*even offered* a massage.” He just has a complaint: “I wish that Chinese girls would shave their pussies, that would be the icing on the cake”, which further proves his objectifying attitude that regards women as products for men's consumption.

Verbs for him: active and dominating role	Verbs for her: passive and compliant role
“bent her over”; ”probing her (as deep as I could); “laid her”; “pushed her legs (high and wide)”; “I licked and flicked (with my tongue)”; “I pulled her hood back” pushed myself in deep”, “I played with”; “pumped her”; “I pushed in deep”; “impaling her (on my big cock)”; “blew my load.”	“She was nice and pink inside”; “had a surprisingly large clitoris”; “She tasted very good”; “she <i>obligingly</i> held her legs up”; <u>cleaned him up nicely</u> ” and “ <i>even offered</i> a massage / <u>folding</u> my clothes; <u>slipped her skirt down to reveal</u> ; <u>cleaned me up nicely</u> ; <u>offered</u> a massage.

PunterNet UK

Review of Sisi of Edmonton

Review No. 119922 - Published 9 May 2015

Details of Visit:

Author: volvic

Type of Visit: Incall

Date and Time of Visit: Thu 7 May 2015 14:30

Duration of Visit: 12 Minutes

Amount Paid: 40

Recommended: No

Details of Service Provider:

Phone: 07448351549

The Premises:

Very shabby ground-floor studio at the back of a large dilapidated house in Edmonton. Walk through broken fencing to access door.

Very small and rather messy inside.

The Lady:

Small, petite Bulgarian girl with slightly saggy tits, but smooth skin. 22 years old. Said she had a 6 year old kid in Bulgaria!

The Story:

VERY BAD.

OMG, why oh why do I do this?

- Immediately tried to get me to pay more and stay longer.
- Disappeared from the flat once I had handed over the "15 minute" amount only. Took a while to return.
- Would not take all her clothes off, keeping her grey dressing gown on and her top JUST pulled up for me to touch her tits.
- Would not let me put her tits in my mouth, or get near her nipples with my face.
- Would not allow me to lick her pussy, despite offering this service on her profile!
- Would not allow me to finger her pussy, but just managed to do so a little to find she had a TAMPON up her cunt! Said she was just about to have a period . . .oh yes! Slack pussy!!
- Don't lie like that, don't twist me, Ow I have a pain in my back!

Spat on her had to lubricate her pussy/tampon (I HATE THAT!)

Come on finish, only 15 minutes you know. Pass me the phone so I can check the time!!

The only good bit was when I needed to cum (no chance in that pussy), so whipped it out and wanked myself as she lay on her back with her legs either side of me. Oh Dear . . .Oh Dear . . .just as I spurted my 10 days of spunk from my cock, the condom fell off the end and a 30cm plume of

spunk shot out all over her belly, her dressing gown, the bed and dropped down onto her pussy. RESULT! That will teach you, you b***h.

Then she got narky and told me I owed her and extra tenner now for what I had done. On your bike! But was quick to put my clothes on and leave before her PIMP turned up with a baseball bat or something. Saw no evidence of either, but you know what I mean!

OK, so called her from outside the fence when I arrived and she was there in a couple of seconds to let me through. I checked the time I left on my phone, immediately having "escaped" through the fence and compared it with the call I had made earlier . . .THE WHOLE ESCAPADE had lasted 12 minutes!

AVOID at all costs.

Critical discourse analysis of negative review: the case of “Sisi”

The language of the present review is violent, disrespectful and utterly dramatic. The reader gets to know straight away that she is a young mother working as a prostitute in a foreign country as he describes her briefly by saying “*Small, petite Bulgarian girl* with slightly *saggy tits*, but *smooth skin*. 22 years old. Said she had a 6 year old kid in Bulgaria!” He writes in capital letters several times through the text, which reveals a high level of anger and frustration, as in the opening sentence which is followed by angry remarks about her intending him to stay and pay more: “VERY BAD. OMG, why oh why do I do this? - *Immediately tried to get me to pay more and stay longer*. - *Disappeared from the flat once I had handed over the "15 minute" amount [40 pounds] only. Took a while to return.*” Different lexical choices may have shown neutrality towards her behaviour, such as “I handed over the cash and she left the flat for a few minutes”, but the original sentences show unequivocally that he thinks she is playing with his time and cheating on him.

The sex buyer highlights furiously all the physical boundaries she was trying to set, which indicates he thinks she has no right to the setting of boundaries. He mentions things he wanted to do to her and she did not want him to do, and speaks overtly about having violated them but shows no remorse about doing so, as we can see in: “- **Would not take all** her clothes **off**, **keeping** her grey dressing gown **on** and her top **JUST pulled up for me to touch** her tits. - **Would not let me put** her tits in my mouth, or **get near** her nipples with my face. - **Would not allow me to lick** her pussy, *despite offering this service on her profile!* - **Would not allow me to finger** her pussy, *but just managed to do so a little to find* she had a TAMPON up her *cunt!* Said she was just about to have a period . . .oh yes! *Slack pussy!!*” Following that, he quotes her in what were obvious attempts on her part to let him know she was not comfortable and that he was hurting her, but he just emphasises how awful it was for him to have to spit on her genitalia for him to be able to penetrate her: “- *Don't lie like that, don't twist me, Ow I have a pain in my back! Spat on her had to lubricate her pussy/tampon (I HATE THAT!). Come on finish, only 15 minutes you know. Pass me the phone so I can check the time!!*”.

As in the case of the sex buyer who reviewed Sian, the lexical choices employed here show lack of empathy for Sisi, and he uses her own words to mock her publicly

online. In this case, however, he overtly justifies violent acts on his part by portraying her as blameable: “*The only good bit* was when I needed to cum (*no chance in that pussy*), so whipped it out and wanked myself as she lay on her back with her legs either side of me. Oh Dear . . . Oh Dear . . . just as I spurted my 10 days of spunk from my cock, the condom fell off the end and a 30cm plume of spunk shot out all over her belly, her dressing gown, the bed and dropped down onto her pussy. RESULT! That will teach you, you b***h.” This sex buyer used ejaculation as a sort of symbolic weapon, with the obvious intention of humiliating and punishing the girl. In doing so, he turns the biological process of ejaculating into a politically meaningful act consisting in the actual enactment of male supremacy.

To conclude, he writes: “Then she got narky and told me I owed her and extra tenner now for what I had done. On your bike! But was quick to put my clothes on and leave before her PIMP turned up with a baseball bat or something. Saw no evidence of either, but **you know what I mean!** OK, so called her from outside the fence when I arrived and she was there in a couple of seconds to let me through. I checked the time I left on my phone, immediately having “escaped” through the fence and compared it with the call I had made earlier . . . THE WHOLE ESCAPADE had lasted 12 minutes! AVOID at all costs.” As this sex buyer regards himself as a victim who acted appropriately, this review is an example of how the men may feel “exploited” when they are not satisfied with the outcome of the encounter. The use of the review system of PunterNet, when it entails punishing a prostituted woman and expose her publicly on the Internet, proves the act of reviewing women negatively not to be the mere review of a “discontent customer”, but to potentially serve vengeful purposes when male expectations are not met. Thus, it may turn into a tool to exercise symbolic violence against women.

APPENDIX B

Help Wanted: Women and Girls Do YOU want this job?

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Prostitution has been euphemized as an occupational alternative for women, as an answer to low-paying, low skilled, boring dead-end jobs, as a solution to the high unemployment rate of poor women, as a form of sexual liberation, and a career women freely choose.

Are you tired of mindless, low skilled, low-paying jobs? Would you like a career with flexible hours? Working with people? Offering a professional service?

- No experience required. No high school diploma needed. No minimum age requirement. On-the-job training provided.
- Special opportunities for poor women -- single mothers -- women of color.

Women and girls applying for this position will provide the following services:

- Being penetrated orally, anally, and vaginally with penises, fingers, fists, and objects, including but not limited to, bottles, brushes, dildoes, guns and/or animals;
- Being bound and gagged, tied with ropes and/or chains, burned with cigarettes, or hung from beams or trees;
- Being photographed or filmed performing these acts.
-

Workplace:

Job-related activities will be performed in the following locations: in an apartment, a hotel, a "massage parlor," car, doorway, hallway, street, executive suite, fraternity house, convention, bar, public toilet, public park, alleyway, military base, on a stage, in a glass booth.

Wages:

Wages will be negotiated at each and every transaction. Payment will be delivered when client determines when and if services have been rendered to his satisfaction.

Corporate management fees range from 40-60% of wages; private manager reserves the right to impound all monies earned.

Benefits:

Benefits will be provided at the discretion of management.

NO RESPONSIBILITY OR LEGAL REDRESS FOR THE FOLLOWING ON-THE-JOB HAZARDS:

- Nonpayment for services rendered;
- Sexually transmitted diseases or pregnancy;
- Injuries sustained through performance of services including but not limited to cuts, bruises, lacerations, internal hemorrhaging, broken bones, suffocation, mutilation, disfigurement, dismemberment, and death.

Note: Accusations of rape will be treated as a breach of contract by employee.

Name of applicant: _____

Signature of manager on behalf of applicant: _____